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Apocalypse GORE

THE DARK VISION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

by Adam Wolfson

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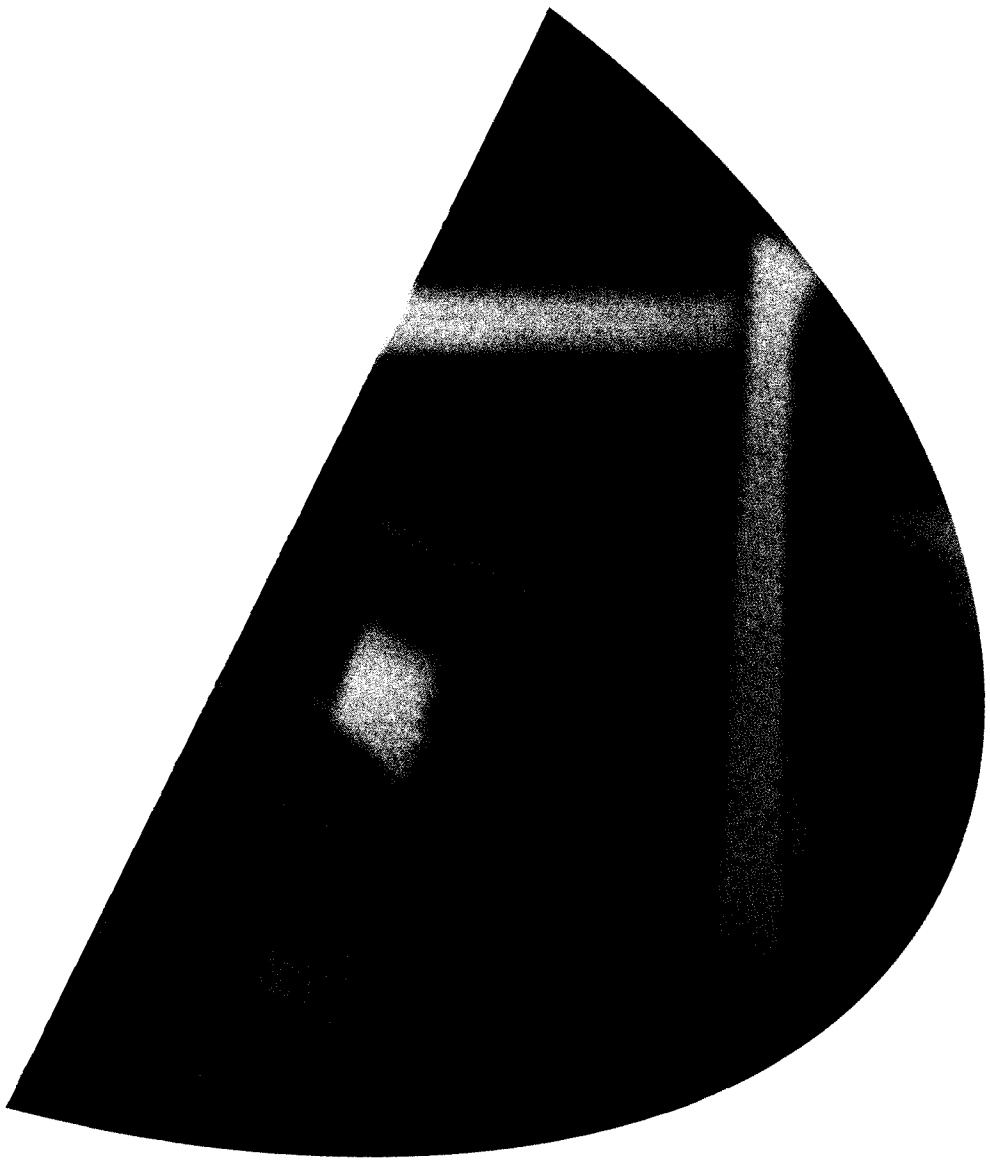

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■ LETTERS ■

CIVILIZING WESTERN CIVILIZATION

In his hilarious article on White House sex ("The Highest Crime," Feb. 8), Christopher Buckley brings up the Profumo scandal. I happened to be in Paris when it broke. *Le Figaro*, which was then a wonderful newspaper, ran a cartoon that depicted Prime Minister Debré leaning over Charles de Gaulle's shoulder and spreading in front of him the pages of a large newspaper in which a lurid headline blazoned, "Her Majesty's Minister Profumo Confesses Sexual Liaison" (or some such thing)—the while asking of *le grand* Charles, "*Mon Général*, do you suppose the British are now civilized enough to enter the Common Market?"

Phew, that was a long sentence!

Reid Buckley
Camden, S.C.

MAXIMUM EXPOSURE

I want to commend NATIONAL REVIEW and Jay Nordlinger for exposing the nation to Maxine Waters ("Shrill Waters," Jan. 25). A book could be written covering the foul and boorish tactics of Ms. Waters—and I have had a couple of experiences that would be prime candidates for inclusion in that publication. Suffice it to say, however, that she is a very distasteful person who reflects badly on the process of civil discourse.

Ward Connerly
Sacramento, Calif.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Your SDI issue (Feb. 22) was probably the greatest journalistic contribution to the advancement of nuclear-weapons strategy since Mark Helprin's *New York Times* article in favor of President Reagan's European missile deployment in the 1980s.

NR's issue, however, should have explored the ramifications of a rogue-state missile strike alone, as compared with the dollar cost of a working SDI program. In other words, how much is it worth to save any Free World city from a possible rogue-state missile strike? First, let us estimate the respective populations of short-range targets like the metropolitan area of London, Paris, Rome, or Jerusalem (or even longer-range targets like New York, Los Angeles, or Washington) at about 10 million. Then, let us estimate the cost of an initial SDI deployment at about $30 billion. The system would cost only $3,000 per person. This is very affordable. Obviously, it is worth the cost.

But we should take it a step further by discussing the U.S. response to a rogue nuclear-missile attack against a Free World city. There would no doubt be a massive nuclear response, not just against the rogue state responsible for the attack, but against all rogue states with nuclear potential. After all, they would be the uncontrollable source of all the world's nuclear annihilation fear and mass hysteria which would follow any attack.

There would easily be 100 million casualties when one includes the response to the attack. We can now reformulate our cost analysis with this in mind. The cost for a $30 billion SDI system is now a mere $300 per person saved. Everyone, mail in your checks immediately! This is much more effective than holding hands across the world!

Michael Boyajian
Brooklyn, N.Y.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

"For the Record" (Feb. 8) reports that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) revoked a grant to the Center for Third World Organizing following criticism from the Capital Research Center (CRC). This information reflects a serious chronological error.

The fact is that CCHD revoked the grant on July 29, 1998, after concluding a routine grant review (which includes an evaluation of progress and respect for Church teaching), fully three months before the CRC issued its annual report on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

The Capital Research Center had been made aware of the chronology of events prior to its recent media release in which it claimed credit for the revocation of this grant.

Rev. Robert J. Vitillo
Catholic Campaign
for Human Development
Washington, D.C.

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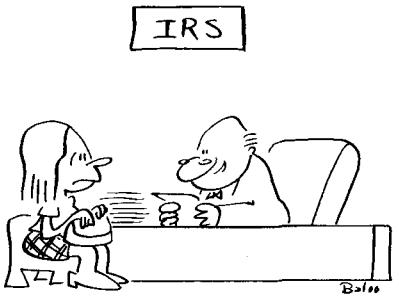
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ **Thomas M. DeFrank** of New York's *Daily News* quotes "dismayed counselor who regularly speaks with the President: 'There's no contrition for what he's done. That's all just an act. He's only sorry he got caught.' " . . . Sen. **Patrick Leahy** (D., Vt.): "Nobody exonerates him. Nobody in the Senate exonerates him." . . . **Larry King**, describing **Clinton**'s politics: "He's a moderate to a conservative." . . . One year after **Hillary Clinton** offers "vast right-wing conspiracy" theory, *New York Times* refines it: "Some of the most serious damage to Bill Clinton's presidency came not from his high-profile political enemies but from *a small secret clique of lawyers in their 30s* who share a deep antipathy toward the president" (italics added). . . . Justice Department sues Visa and MasterCard for antitrust violations, wins applause from American Express, whose board member **Vernon Jordan** was appointed by attorney general **Janet Reno** to an advisory panel on antitrust policy in 1997. . . . Price tag for antitrust case against Microsoft may total $60 million, says Citizens Against Government Waste. . . . Latest estimated cost of **Ken Starr**'s investigation: $41 million.

■ In *Los Angeles Times* poll, Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** beats Vice President **Al Gore** 57 percent to 39 percent. **Elizabeth Dole** also wins, 50 percent to 42 percent. . . . New look at November exit polls suggests Bush didn't carry 49 percent of Hispanic vote, as supporters claim, but 39 percent. Scripps Howard Texas Poll puts Bush approval rating at 81 percent. . . . Madison Project organizes interviews between social conservatives and GOP presidential candidates. **Steve Forbes** comes out ahead: "He raised the comfort level of people there and made us think he's a true believer," says one participant. **Gary Bauer**, **Alan Keyes**, **Dan Quayle**, and **Bob Smith** hit right notes, but many doubt they can win. **John Kasich** earns mixed reviews. "He's a conservative, but his style makes me think he's a male version of **Susan Molinari**," says an attendee. Bush and Dole turn down invitations to appear, but will be asked again. . . . Quayle having trouble hiring campaign staff. . . . Conservatives warn Dole to refrain from hiring husband's 1996 campaign staff, especially moderate-wing pollster **Linda DiVall**.

■ People for the American Way promises to spend $5 million against pro-impeachment House Republicans. . . . Democratic consultant **Bob Beckel** on Fox News Channel: "The Democrats have grabbed hold of things like taxes. I mean, my God, Republicans have owned that for years. And that, I think, has been the cost [of Clinton's impeachment] to the Republicans more than anything else." . . . Rasmussen poll: 68



"Well, well. You made thirteen hundred dollars more last year than you did the year before—you people never learn, do you?"

percent support 10 percent across-the-board tax cut. . . . Rep. **James McDermott** (D., Wash.) tells *National Journal* why Medicare recipients shouldn't have more choice in health plans: "This whole business that you put 35 million seniors out there with a book in hand and have them try to pick a program that fits their needs is erroneous from the start." Adds **Stuart Altman**, a Clinton appointee to the bipartisan Medicare commission: "When you get to Medicare, you're dealing with a lot of poor people and people who are in trouble in terms of making decisions." . . . November 1998 voter turnout lowest since 1942, says Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. . . . Rep. **Chris Cox** (R., Calif.) decides against challenging Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D.) in 2000, despite three-to-one lead in cash on hand. . . . Rep. **Jim Talent** (R.) announces candidacy for governor of Missouri. . . . Minnesota Gov. **Jesse Ventura** wins authority to carry a handgun in state buildings.

■ **Jesse Jackson** criticizes budget of New York Gov. **George Pataki** (R.), comparing him to segregationist leaders **Orval Faubus** and **George Wallace**. "We see Pataki in that tradition," says Jackson. . . . Al Gore, speaking at a Congressional Black Caucus dinner, calls for "more political maturity" instead of attempts to repeal racial preferences. . . . Boston School Board, abiding by request of liberal civil-rights groups, decides not to appeal court ruling against color-coded admissions policy at Boston Latin School. NAACP and allies fear Supreme Court would issue sweeping decision against racial preferences. . . . Elkins High School in West Virginia requires students and teachers to wear a bar-coded ID card at all times for school lunches, library checkout, and security. . . . Detroit school board approves reinstating school prayer. . . . In Dallas, 13,000 city workers receive W-2 tax forms with "deceased" box marked. . . . Clinton budget includes $5.7 million to purchase land and tear down 310-foot observation tower overlooking Gettysburg battlefield. . . . **Ben Swanson**, head of **Samuel D. Harris** National Museum of Dentistry says **George Washington** never wore wooden teeth.

■ Mexico City crime rate drops by nearly 30 percent during January papal visit. . . . Russian Defense Ministry report says government must make drastic budget cuts in order to pay for armed forces until 2000. . . . U.N. World Health Organization gears up for global campaign against tobacco advertising. . . . As departing French ambassador to New Zealand causes flap for saying local women dress "like soldiers" and give "the impression of wanting to look like men," Parliament considers granting "human rights" to apes.

■ Rep. **Matt Salmon** (R., Ariz.) proposes adding **Ronald Reagan**'s likeness to Mt. Rushmore. Quips: "I hear my Democratic friends want to add two faces to Mt. Rushmore—Bill Clinton." **NR**

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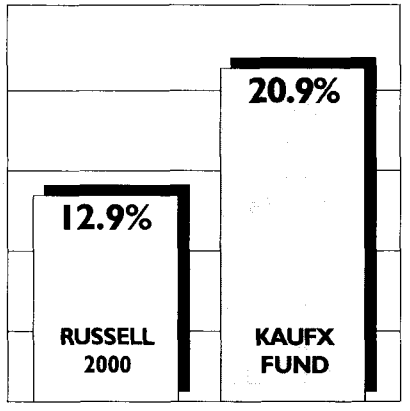

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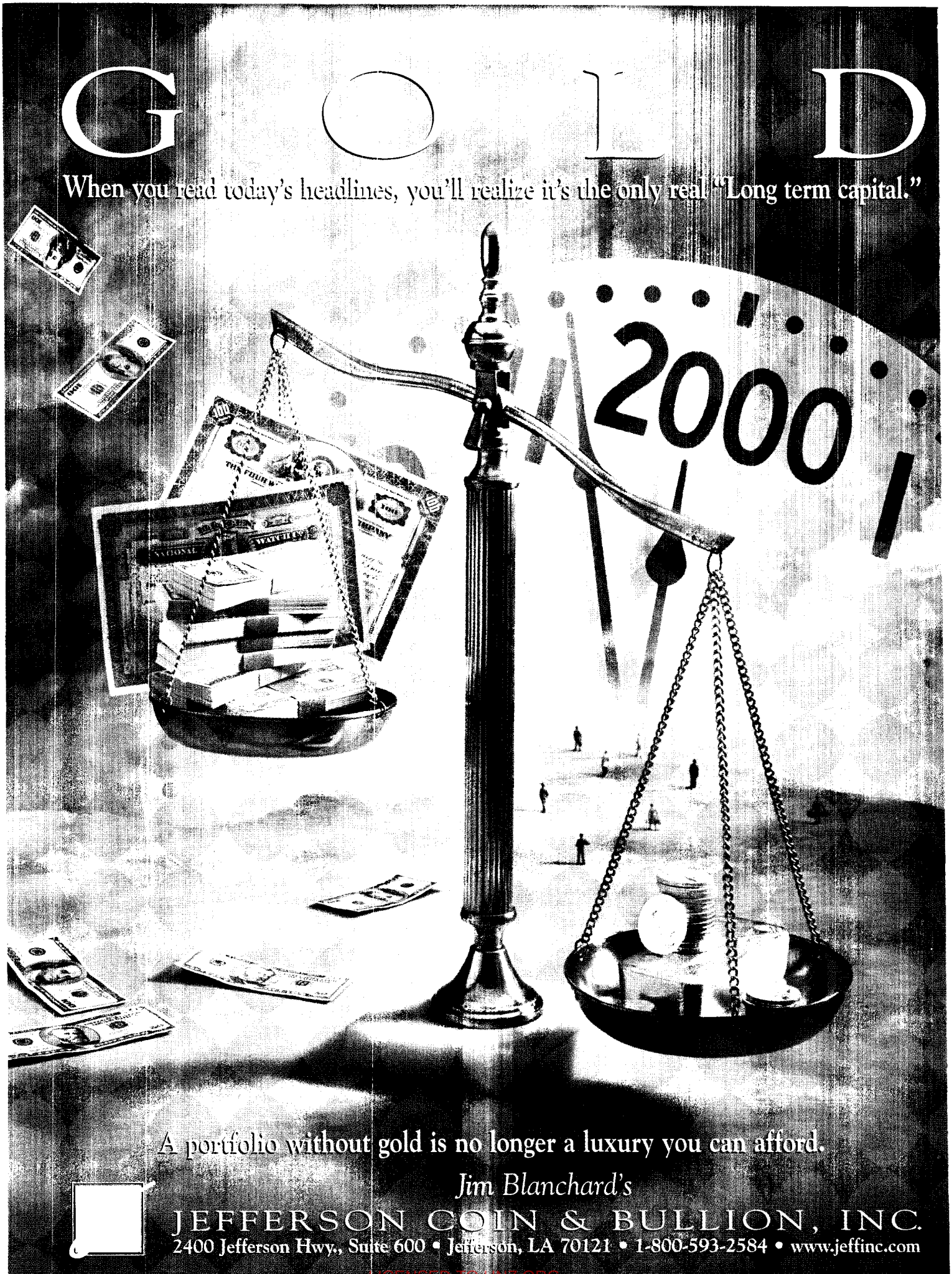
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THE WEEK

■ President Clinton, traveling in Mexico, said the First Lady would "be great" if she decided to run for Senate from New York. A word to the wise: All constitutional scholars agree that the Senate may censure its own members.

■ "His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man" (Thomas Jefferson on George Washington, letter to Dr. Walter Jones, January 2, 1814). POSITION AVAILABLE. *Description:* See above. *Term of service:* Four to eight years; removal from office possible, though not likely. *Apply to:* The American people.

■ According to leaks from the Justice Department, Janet Reno wants to investigate Kenneth Starr for misleading her last year when she authorized him to expand his probe to the Lewinsky matter. Reno apparently believes the independent counsel's office should have told her about informal talks between Starr staffer Paul Rosenzweig and Jerome Marcus, a lawyer on the periphery of the Paula Jones complaint. When Rosenzweig approached Starr deputy Jackie Bennett about these contacts in January 1998, however, Bennett insisted that any information bearing on the case needed "to come through the front door." In other words, Starr's office never understood itself to be in touch with Jones's attorneys. This hardly represents collusion. Even if there were more to it, Reno's investigation itself is dubious. As the Landmark Legal Foundation has pointed out, only Congress has the authority to investigate Starr's conduct. The independent-counsel law explicitly denies the attorney general the power that Reno is now exercising. And Reno has hardly been a stickler for applying the independent-counsel law—just ask Harold Ickes, or John Huang, or Al Gore. Reno, this administration's useful idiot, is now the 20th century's longest-serving attorney general. At this rate, she'll break the all-time record—during the third year of the Gore administration.

■ In his latest essay on the Clinton scandal, Bill Bennett shows why so many conservatives have wanted him to run for president: He says things that nobody else says and he says them well. Yet he is insufficiently charitable in interpreting public opinion. He writes, "The hard truth is that many Americans are not merely tolerating Mr. Clinton; they are embracing him. The president has higher approval ratings and is more admired today than before the Lewinsky scandal broke. . . . In one recent poll, Mr. Clinton ranked first among the men Americans most admire in the world, easily outdistancing the second-place finisher, Pope John Paul II." But "most admired" surveys are essentially tests of celebrity. Asked an open-ended question, people will often respond with the first person they can think of. Certainly the president's *personal* approval ratings do not suggest a public embrace of him. And Bennett should consider that while many Americans oppose Clinton's removal because they support him, many others support him because they oppose his removal. That is, the president's job approval is to some extent a result of the public's belief that the charges did not warrant his removal and, yes, of the public's desire for stability. This would explain why Clinton's numbers go up as the apparent danger to him increases—and why those numbers may sink now that *la commedia è finita*.

■ The National Prayer Breakfast this year was a doozy. President Clinton remarked, "I do believe that even though Adolf Hitler preached a perverted form of Christianity, God did not want him to prevail. But I also know that when we take up arms or words against one another, we must be very careful in invoking the name of our Lord." Here we have glibness, an essential indifference to history (Hitler sometimes used Christianity, but more often sought to replace it with a pagan cult), a sloppiness of language reflecting a sloppiness of thought (why "But"?), liberal piety, and reflexive hedging ("I do believe," but who knows?—maybe God was rooting for the Nazis). Sen. Joe Lieberman asked God to accept Clinton's atonement—assuming, apparently, that it was sincere—and that He help all of us join with Clinton "to heal the breach, begin the reconciliation, and restore our national soul." Here we have the cheap grace of a therapeutic culture, dressed up in the language of religion. Even Rep. Steve Largent's words—"I want you to know that I care for you and love you, and that's part of the mystery of Jesus"—sounded like the talk of "closure" that has dropped so frequently from politicians' lips. It's a good thing that "restoring our national soul" is not the business of government and, please God, never will be.

■ In *Hamilton* v. *Accu-Tek*, a case recently decided by a federal jury in Brooklyn, the relatives of seven shooting victims tried to hold makers of firearms liable for the harm caused by gun-wielding criminals. The plaintiffs said the companies were guilty of "oversupplying" guns to states with few restrictions, knowing that some of the weapons would end up on the streets of New York. This alleged pattern of negligence was said to justify collective industry responsibility for gun violence, based on market share. In other words, the plaintiffs

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wanted to win damages without even showing that the defendants' products had anything to do with the shootings. Whether the jury actually bought this audacious theory is a matter of debate. It found 15 of 25 manufacturers negligent and nine liable, but it ordered damages—$560,000, a modest sum by the standards of modern litigation—for just one shooting. Even if this confusing decision is overturned on appeal, it is apt to encourage cities to file similar suits (Chicago already has). Such litigation is mainly aimed at achieving policy changes, such as the elimination of part-time dealers and serial purchases, that gun-control supporters have been unable to win through the democratic process. That the *Hamilton* jurors were making policy rather than assessing a tort claim was evident from a remark that one of them made after the verdict. "Some liked guns and some didn't," he said. "That's why it took so long."

■ Rev. Jerry Falwell finds himself in a customary position—the object of derision. He issued a "Parent Alert" warning that Tinky Winky, one of TV's "Teletubbies," is gay. Within hours, everyone was scoffing. "Falwell's paranoia about gay people has reached a new and ludicrous high water mark," exclaimed one gay group. But really: Tinky Winky has been a prominent gay icon since he first appeared in 1997. In Britain, the actor who plays Winky is under the protection of gay-rights groups. When he had "artistic differences" with producers, as when he was arrested for public nudity, the gay community rallied to save his job. According to the *Washington Post*'s Hanna Rosin, a Tinky Winky backpack is quite the gay fashion statement in Britain. Indeed, the *Post* labeled Winky the "Gay Teletubby" earlier this year in its annual In/Out list. Winky was in. Now, for sure, he's out.

■ DON'T MISS *Stolen Years*, a documentary on the Soviet prison camps under Stalin. PBS has scheduled it for release on March 4, the 46th anniversary of Stalin's death, at 10 P.M., but watch your local listings for variables. *Stolen Years* is produced by the Blackwell Corporation, Neal Freeman, executive producer. Mr. Freeman was for several years NR's Washington editor, serving now as an NR director. The documentary recounts a gruesome era in modern history. It is introduced by historian Robert Conquest and reproduces many sites of Soviet terror, including the notorious Lubyanka prison and the Kolyma gold camps. One survivor tells us in the film, "God, if my suffering were not in vain, I only want to leave some traces of what happened. Not traces for myself; I'm a modest person. I just want people to know what kind of suffering there was." Those who did not know and watch, will know. Those who knew already must watch to honor the victims, and those who struggle to keep their story alive.

■ John Erlichman, who died at 73, will go down in history as the man who supervised the White House plumbers during the Nixon administration. As the *New York Times* put it in its obit, he and his White House colleagues involved in the Watergate coverup "all were convicted on Jan. 1, 1975, of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury. They were sentenced to two and a half to eight years in prison." "If I had any advice for my kids," Erlichman himself once said, "it would be never—to never, ever—defer your moral judgments to anybody . . . " Unless you face an equally deferential Senate.

■ "So the Snake tried to eat the Toad," said Alice, "but the poison in the Toad's skin made the Snake spit him out." But which, pray tell, was Sidney Blumenthal and which was Christopher Hitchens?

IMPEACHMENT

Recessional

ONE emotion conservatives can spare themselves on the morning after is chagrin at pondering lost chances. Clearly, the fix was in. Only one Democratic senator broke party ranks, on two procedural votes. These men and women were determined to protect their own, whatever happened. Their basic calculation was partisan self-interest: As late as early fall, when it seemed that President Clinton's lying and rutting might damage the party, some talked of his resignation. When the November elections showed that no damage had been done, the party closed ranks.

The fix was effected by means of the perverse self-regard of the Senate, which, after Clinton himself, is the great villain of the piece. It probably should have been no surprise that a body which conducts so much of its business by continuing resolutions and omnibus spending bills would have held a Cliff's Notes trial, but the spectacle—no testimony, three depositions—was still shocking. The senators wanted endless air time, but no mention of frisky details in their hallowed halls; they professed to resolve a great national crisis, without putting at risk their chummy bonhomie; they pretended to agonize over moral (Sen. Lieberman) and constitutional (Sen. Byrd) issues, without disturbing their composure or their coiffures. Byrd, who simultaneously declared that Clinton was guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors and that he could "work with" him, probably spoke for many. Never let it be said that jury nullification is the province of black jurors, judging black defendants. The white Senate let the Great White Father walk. They were like the Senate of the late Roman Republic, or of the empire itself: gutless grandees, decorating the underlying power plays.

Still, there is room for celebration. The fundamental institutions gave brave individuals the chance to make a difference. Bravest of all was Henry Hyde and his ablest managers: Lindsey Graham, Asa Hutchinson, and James Rogan. Fighting an even lonelier battle in the Senate were Phil Gramm, the rock against censure, and Rick Santorum, facing both a tough re-election and the showboating of his Pennsylvania colleague, Arlen Specter. Accused of partisanship, these men were willing to give Al Gore a 21-month head start on the 2000 election. They endured endless abuse and (in Hyde's case) the exposure of 30-

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year-old sins. Woody Allen said that 80 percent of success was showing up. One hundred percent of courage is showing up when there is dangerous work to be done. These men did.

Americans should not underestimate the seriousness of the situation. The Senate's vote, and the people's acquiescence, bring President Clinton formally closer to the status of a monarch than any previous chief executive. Kindergarten teachers used to tell their charges that no one was above the law, not even the President of the United States. One hopes that, for the sake of the future, they will still say so, but it is not true of this president. We are now governed instead by the principles of Byzantine jurisprudence: *quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem:* what pleases the prince has the force of law. Ours is, to be sure, a limited monarchy, but so was George III's. We

■ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ■

Prince Henry

HENRY Hyde, the rock of the House managers, recently talked to NR about the impeachment trial and its aftermath.

NR: Has it been a bitter experience?

Hyde: Well, it hasn't been pleasant, really. The criticism of most of the media has been unpleasant. The death threats, the insults, and the hate mail have not been pleasant.

NR: Do you have security?

Hyde: Yes. I have two Capitol policemen who go with me everywhere. They go home with me, back to my district. They wake me up and they take me home. They're with me wherever I go.

NR: What are your impressions of the Senate?

Hyde: The Senate is another planet, actually. Their rules and regulations—bipartisanship is a fetish with them. They would rather do something bipartisan than win. We didn't quite realize that until we got over there and we found that nobody really wanted us there.

NR: Were they pleasant to you in person or did you get cold shoulders?

Hyde: No, they were civil and pleasant. They came up and chatted. Except Mr. Harkin, who is a prizewinner. He takes an oath to do impartial justice and within minutes he's on television saying that our program is a "pile of dung." And of course, he hadn't heard a damn word of it. But that's typical Harkinism.

NR: Would you characterize what happened in the Senate as jury nullification?

Hyde: I think so. Senator Byrd is another strange, or curious, case, because he purports to be the guardian of the Constitution. But he wanted to shut the doors on us before we had made any presentation. He says things—like Joe Lieberman, who made a marvelous statement on what's wrong with Mr. Clinton—and at the end wimps out.

NR: What did you think of Dale Bumpers's presentation?

Hyde: It was okay—he's a good speaker, has a good voice, and he's able to simulate sincerity. Bumpers, not wanting to leave the military metaphors to me, mentioned with a catch in his voice how his dad waited with him for a bus to take him to another city where he was going to enlist in the Marines. I mean, the guy never heard a shot fired in anger. He didn't go overseas or anything. To get a catch in your voice over *that* is Laurence Olivier.

NR: How about Cheryl Mills?

Hyde: She played the race card beautifully. She said that nobody had anything to worry about civil-rights-wise with this president. I said, "Not unless your name is Paula Jones."

NR: Should you have accepted in November the Democratic inquiry plan?

Hyde: No, because we were just getting started and we had no idea if Travelgate and Filegate would come in over the transom. The resolution the Democrats offered confined the referral to the Lewinsky matter. We were looking for *anything* but sex, if we could get our hands on it, and we couldn't.

NR: Did you make a decision to focus on obstruction in the Senate?

Hyde: There was no set plan to do that. I felt, and still feel, that there was perjury, lots of perjury. And that count was every bit as valid and good as the obstruction. The fact that the chief law-enforcement officer in the land can lie under oath—I don't care what it's about, a grocery list. It's wrong and it erodes the rule of law.

NR: Why didn't you call Betty Currie?

Hyde: In the first place, we had her statement under oath before the grand jury. And she kept changing her statement. The more she testified, the weaker she got. So, we didn't trust her, frankly. And then you get into the race issue. Picking on a black woman. What if she starts to cry in the well of the Senate? Oh, God.

NR: Do you think Ken Starr should consider indicting the president?

Hyde: Probably not. I don't know that it does America much good to have a president, or even an ex-president, in jail.

NR: What does this mean for public life?

Hyde: I think it demeans public life. I'm really at a loss. Eighty percent of people think this guy lied under oath. They know all about Lewinsky. But a high percentage of them want him to stay in office. Which can only mean that the only thing that counts is the Dow Jones, not Paula Jones.

NR: You're a big moviegoer. Were you able to see movies during this mess?

Hyde: Oh yes: *Saving Private Ryan*, a fantastic movie. And *Shakespeare in Love*—that didn't knock me out.

NR: So you'd take *Saving Private Ryan* over *Shakespeare in Love*?

Hyde: Yes, I would. The most powerful part of *Saving Private Ryan* was at the very end, when the old-timer Private Ryan asks his wife if he's led a useful life, a good life.

NR: What are you going to do next?

Hyde: I'm going to try to write a book. I'm going to try to record my thoughts on this thing—from Aardvark to Zimbabwe—and see if I can do it, or if I tire of it. **NR**

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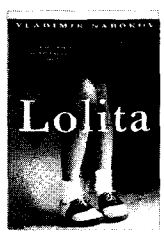

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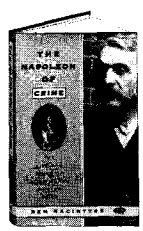

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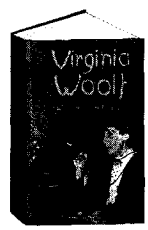

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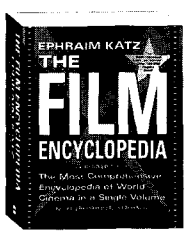

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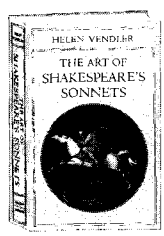

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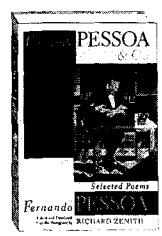

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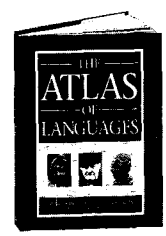

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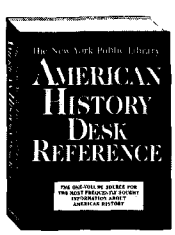

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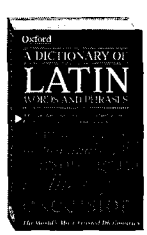

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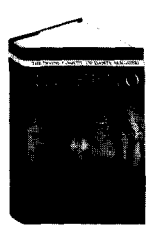

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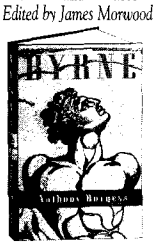

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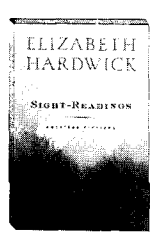

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have retroactively decided that the Battle of Saratoga was a tragic misunderstanding.

Yet, while not ignoring how far we have sunk, we should not make the parallel mistake of assuming that we are stuck here. Today's victors have no lock on history, or even on the next election. Politics, unlike sports, does not end at the finish line, the fourth quarter, or the championship. It flows on, in endless permutations, and the right-minded always have the burden of making their case anew. A favorite sentence of Russell Kirk's, borrowed from T. S. Eliot, is appropriate here: "There are no lost causes, because there are no gained causes." Let the work continue.

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Full Speed Ahead

CONGRESSIONAL Republicans claim to be still working on their agenda, but its contours are already clear: Pass some "bipartisan accomplishments" and mark time until a presidential nominee emerges to shepherd the GOP out of the darkness. This is a strategy that ignores recent history. Instead of waiting for Bill Clinton, the Democrats of the early '90s blocked President Bush's program and sent him popular legislation of their own. Bush was forced to alienate conservatives by signing, or to lose broader public support by vetoing. To craft a platform, Clinton had merely to promise what Bush had vetoed.

Republicans have so far only a set of "themes" waiting to be fleshed out: taxes, Social Security, education, defense, drugs. This isn't a terrible start, but the specifics matter. The new focus on defense is welcome, for example, but it is not enough to hike military pay or even to demand missile defenses. Manpower, equipment, and force modernization all need attention. Above all, the GOP must defend a military culture besieged by feminists and others who would replace it with a civilian ethos.

Republicans will have no luck trying to persuade voters that Democrats are soft on drugs. They are even less likely to persuade them that *they* are more eager to spend money on education than Democrats. Yet this appears to be their hope. Sen. Pete Domenici, chairman of the Budget Committee, wants to increase federal education spending by a whopping 40 percent.

A better course would be to realize that education has become a national issue, but need not be a federal one. Congressional Republicans can wage worthwhile fights with Clinton on school choice for D.C., educational savings accounts, and so on. Beyond that, they should cede the field to their governors. One way to do this is to take funds for the biggest federal programs and give them to the states, no strings attached. Let the popular governors, always hungry for "free" cash, help build support for the idea.

On Social Security, Republicans should hold firm against Clinton's plan to have the government use the program's funds to buy large chunks of corporate America. And they should keep making the case for letting workers invest these funds themselves, even though they probably won't be able to enact that policy. While the public still trusts Democrats and distrusts Republicans with Social Security, the public prefers the substance of the Republican approach.

Politically, the most important item on the Republican agenda is tax relief. Tax cuts act simultaneously as a magnet for independent voters, a wedge between taxpaying Democratic voters and tax-loving Democratic politicians, a shield blunting attacks on Republicans for opposing tax-financed goodies, and Prozac for conservatives. Polls to the contrary cannot be trusted, owing to the public's cynicism about the likelihood of ever getting tax cuts. Whatever the specifics of the tax-cut proposal (see Ramesh Ponnuru's "Apolitical Animals," page 28), it needs to be big enough to get voters' attention.

Finally, Republicans can't confine their agenda to five points. They should keep daring Clinton to defend partial-birth abortion. They should provide huge savings for consumers by passing electricity deregulation and tort reform for car accidents. They should respond to patients' complaints of powerlessness with reforms that let them own their health policies. A few free-market environmental initiatives would better position Republicans to explain that Al Gore's environmentalism is an attack on middle-class values and interests. And an enterprising presidential candidate can take the lead in the campaigns to abolish preferences and rein in judicial imperialism.

We realize that we are proposing an ambitious, crowded agenda for a congressional majority that will be busy enough fending off bad ideas on campaign finance, the minimum wage, and so on. Good. It's time to go back on offense.

SEEKING COVER

Imagine Noah with no ark:
For Democrats, the scene's so stark,
Dodd pales, while Feinstein peers above
In search of that damn censure dove;
But like the raven at the door,
Phil Gramm keeps quothing, "Nevermore!"

—W. H. VON DREELE

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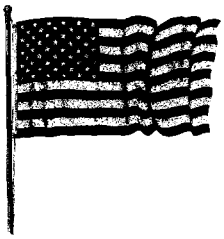

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ly common, does not lead, in most cases, to happy marriage. Finally, the world of men's magazines is engaged in a Cleavage War, in which the contenders, led by the Brit transplant *Maxim*, seek to display greater and greater swatches of the glories of womanhood (or some of them, anyway).

The surprise is that we are surprised. *Maxim* and the rest are showing, with less talent and to larger audiences, what princes once paid Titian and Boucher to put in their boudoirs; only expense, law, and custom limit the male aesthetic and libido. Popenoe and Whitehead examine many aspects of cohabitation. But perhaps their most interesting statistic is this: Between 1976 and 1980, 45 percent of boys who were high-school seniors and 30 percent of the girls who were their classmates thought it was a "good idea" to live together before getting married; in the early Nineties, these figures had risen to 60 percent and 50 percent respectively. Young men lead the push for living together, and young women increasingly tag along (witness the shrinking margin between the sexes). The figures on sexual dissatisfaction are not gender-neutral. A third of women say they regularly do not want sex, as compared with only 14 percent of men. A third of men, however, admit they have problems with climaxing too early. Could the two different thirds be related?

Perhaps Bill Clinton is a more considerable figure than even his political skill would suggest. He has, of course, been lawfully wedded for over 20 years. But his love 'em, leave 'em extracurricular style reflects a trend in the culture at large. Moreover, he and his fellow (male) Americans have pursued it under the aegis of feminist triumphalism. Taming the male is a delicate task, requiring more art than modern liberalism can muster.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Bill: Here is a copy of the letter I just faxed to Brian Lamb at C-SPAN about his interview with Rich Lowry. A lot of our readers must have seen it so I want to set the record straight. I was going to write it as a column, but I don't think I should use the column for personal things. Could you find room for it in "Notes & Asides," or suggest some other way to publicize it? Many thanks.

Love, Florence

Dear Florence: Of course I will use it, and keep a copy of it next to my pillow.

Love, Bill

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I don't watch your show but I have just heard from my best friend from college, a self-confessed C-SPAN junkie who tells me, alarmingly, that she watches you "all the time."

She summarized the discussion you had about me with NR editor Rich Lowry. The purpose of this letter is to correct or enlarge upon what was said.

First, I do not spend my time in "bars." I am a Southern gentlewoman and would not enter a bar unescorted if you held a gun to my head. I do drink, as who in this god-awful country would not, but I do it at home. Back when I toured my books and spent time in out-of-town hotels, I would have a drink in the cocktail lounge, but I always insisted on a table because no lady can sit at a bar and still remain a lady. I remember when New York lounges had signs reading "Unescorted women will not be served at the bar." I think such rules should be brought back—"women's rights" be damned.

Second, in answer to your question about my age, Rich said he did not know how old I am and would not dream of asking. I can't imagine what possessed him to say that. I despise women who won't tell their age. I was born at 11:40 P.M., Sunday, January 5, 1936, at 1207 Park Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. I went to the D.C. public schools, graduating from Raymond Elementary in 1947; Powell-Central Junior High in 1950; and Theodore Roosevelt High in 1953. I also went to college in D.C., graduating from American University in 1957. Now, count.

Third, Rich said my NR column takes a "different view" of things, such as children. He should be charged with unnecessary gentleness. In my opinion, children are seen, heard, nasty, brutish, and short. Pedophilia is a mystery to me; I fail to understand how anyone can be sexually attracted to a shapeless, hairless, falsetto runt. Moreover, in order to molest a child you must first be in the same room with a child, and I don't know how perverts stand it.

Fourth, my misanthropy. I agree with Jonathan Swift, who gave us a popular figure of speech when asked about his own misanthropy: "I hate and despise the animal called Mankind, but I like the occasional Tom, Dick, or Harry."

I am not quite the recluse that Rich painted me. While it's true that I insist on communicating by fax and e-mail on editorial matters, I do so because it's quicker and more precise than phone calls, which tend to veer off on tangents and lead to confusion and misunderstanding. I know from experience that editing on the phone is a disaster waiting to happen and I refuse to do it. Otherwise, I enjoy the phone calls and company of a select few people, such as NR's associate publisher, Jack Fowler—a Tom, Dick, and Harry rolled into one—who also visits me.

I do not, however, grant interviews or appear on shows. To borrow King Lear's answer: "Never, never, never, never, never." As for your offer, via Rich, to drive down to Fredericksburg to see me, I will say only this: Put it out of your mind at once.

Yours sincerely,
(Miss) Florence King

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I saw you on PBS today and enjoyed your comment that "A and B decide how much C should give to D." After pondering your quip, I came to a realization that your formula is not complete. It is my feeling that the following formula more nearly approximates the reality: A and B decide how much C should allocate to D to distribute to E to give out to F. I am sure that I have still left something out.

Best regards,
Jerry Kleker
Cottonwood, Ariz.

—WFB

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40	$ 153	$ 188	$ 200	$ 298	$ 300
45	$ 200	$ 210	$ 265	$ 400	$ 415
50	$ 260	$ 313	$ 400	$ 578	$ 608
55	$ 385	$ 440	$ 600	$ 956	$ 1,065
60	$ 535	$ 690	$ 865	$ 3,140	$ 3,140
65	$ 883	$ 1,015	$ 1,733	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
70	$1,430	$ 1,637	$ 3,035	$ 5,270	$ 7,220
75	$2,797	$ 4,770	$ 6,560	$10,370	$10,370

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 138	$ 163	$ 198	$ 280	$ 300
40	$ 185	$ 210	$ 260	$ 385	$ 383
45	$ 260	$ 335	$ 395	$ 548	$ 585
50	$ 378	$ 500	$ 600	$ 863	$ 915
55	$ 568	$ 758	$ 865	$ 1,805	$ 2,810
60	$ 908	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
65	$1,530	$ 1,845	$ 2,923	$ 5,270	$ 5,270
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■ THE SCANDAL ■

Dubious Counsel

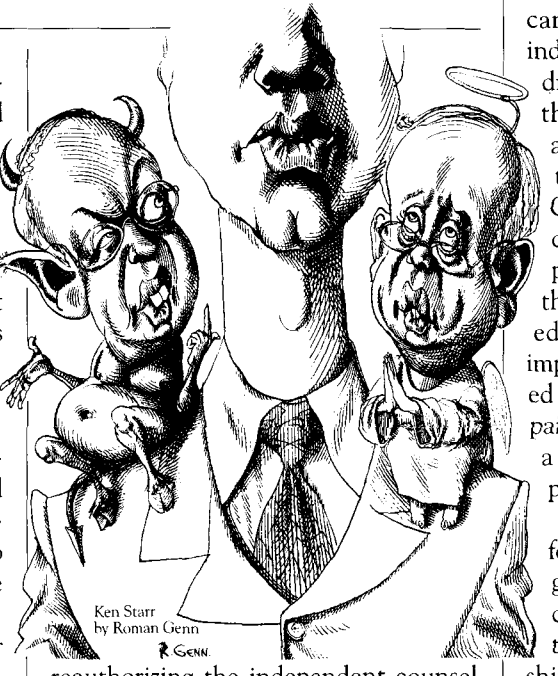
Why the independent-counsel law should still go.

ROBERT H. BORK

No higher tribute to the independent-counsel statute could be paid than the outpouring of hatred directed at Kenneth Starr by congressional Democrats and the liberal media. Starr is routinely depicted as an out-of-control prosecutor obsessed with sex and a pawn of the "Christian Right." That there is no foundation for these charges matters not in the slightest in view of Starr's real crime: He proved that President Bill Clinton committed repeated perjuries, tampered with witnesses in federal investigations, and obstructed justice. Without an independent counsel—and one as devoted to truth as Starr—we would never have known of the president's crimes.

There can be no doubt that Starr made his case, as did the House managers. Yet Democratic senators and other Clinton sycophants say there is no case and cast Starr as a villain. Now the ever-compliant Janet Reno will investigate—not Clinton or Al Gore or Harold Ickes, for taking money from the Chinese army to finance the Democrats' 1996 election campaign (she has given them a pass without even looking)—but Starr, for "collusion" with Paula Jones's attorneys. If there was communication between the two staffs, the correct response is, So what? There is no reason on God's green earth that a prosecutor should not seek information from attorneys in a parallel case. Clinton's smear-and-destroy police are at it again.

What, then, should we think about reauthorizing the independent-counsel statute when it comes up for renewal in June? That the law has served us well in Clinton's case does not obscure the fact that it has served us ill in many others. Given the intense partisanship that too often infects the independent counsel's office, the law is as likely to produce spectacular injustice as it is to achieve justice.



The statute creates an officer who has it in his power—and has incentives—to work grave injustices. Lawrence Walsh set the all-time record for abuse of the office, applying statutes in radical ways never attempted before and vindictively pursuing individuals until, their funds exhausted, they had little alternative to admitting something. As Jacob Stein, one of the fairest of the independent counsel, remarked, "You can overpower anyone. . . . Nobody can compete with you, especially an individual." Starr, by contrast, has done none of this.

In instances like Walsh's, the statute creates an institutionalized wolf to harry the executive's flank. The law was used by Democrats to assault the moral legitimacy of the presidency and weaken the resolve of members of the executive branch. Men who carried out the president's policies or defended his constitutional powers found themselves under lengthy investigation by prosecutors whose sole mission was to convict them. The coercive power of the statute is enormously magnified by the provision that the investigatee's legal expenses can be reimbursed only if he is not indicted. Otherwise he must pay hundreds of thousands in legal fees even if the indictment is dropped or he is acquitted. Such provisions were thoughtfully crafted by Democratic Congresses with Republican presidents in mind. They did not anticipate that George Bush would hand them the presidency. Democrats created the statute and now, so far as impeachment is concerned, have defeated it by an unprecedently vicious campaign organized from the White House, a campaign Starr could not with propriety answer.

The law provides an excuse, it is said, for the Justice Department and Congress to shirk their constitutional duties. That is true to an extent, but this department needs no excuse for shirking (and worse), and Congress often shows little or no appetite to call a popular president to account. Paula Jones's lawsuit, Linda Tripp's tapes, and the stained blue dress together initiated and then revealed Clinton's cover-up, but the clues would not have been followed up with the necessary determination and resources were it not for the existence of the independent counsel. Neither House of Congress would have pursued the matter with the same expertise and dogged determination. Clinton would once more have slicked by.

A further virtue of the law is that it mitigates somewhat the politicization of the Justice Department, which has reached unprecedented depths under Clinton and Janet Reno. The reliability of the department had been demonstrated, I once thought, by the indictment of, and plea bargain with, Vice President Spiro Agnew, and the U.S. attorney's investigation and framing of the case against Nixon and his aides, the results

Mr. Bork has had a 45-year career as a lawyer, professor, solicitor general, acting attorney general, judge, and scholar. His latest book is *Slouching towards Gomorrah.*

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of which were handed over to Archibald Cox. Moreover, I thought, any attempt at concealment would surely be defeated by leaks from career prosecutors. But in this case there have been no leaks adverse to Clinton, and Justice under Reno has systematically failed to investigate or seek independent counsel for any matters that come too close to the White House. (How was she to know of

■

The Justice Department has failed to seek independent counsel for matters too close to the White House.

■

the stained blue dress when she let Starr investigate?) The instances of her malfeasance are almost too many to recount.

It is, furthermore, easier to trigger the appointment of an independent counsel, the mechanism being already in place, than it is to obtain a special prosecutor. Archibald Cox would never have been appointed but for a miscalculation by Richard Nixon. Nixon fired Richard Kleindienst and nominated Elliot Richardson, thus playing into the Democrats' hands. The Senate Judiciary Committee conditioned Richardson's confirmation on his appointment of a special prosecutor who could be fired only for cause. Had Nixon not fired Kleindienst, there probably would have been no special prosecutor. If the statute had been in effect then, however, pressure would have forced Kleindienst to seek an independent counsel. Reno may have been kept in place so long because Clinton, learning from Nixon's mistake, realized that a Republican Senate might attach conditions to the confirmation of a new attorney general.

There are a variety of ways in which the independent-counsel law could be amended to make it less unjust, but no amendment that preserves the integrity of the office can overcome one flaw that ought to prove fatal: the law is flatly unconstitutional, despite the Supreme Court's ruling in *Morrison* v. *Olson*.

Article II of the Constitution vests the entire executive power of the United States in the president, including the sole duty that he "shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed." The Supreme Court was particularly unpersuasive in *Morrison*, in effect saying that if the law left the president with much of the law-enforcement power, that was good enough. In a fit of pique, I gave a constitutional-law examination in which Congress created an "independent colonel" to take over military operations when Congress was unsatisfied with the leadership of the armed forces. Most of the class thought *Morrison* authorized Congress to share the executive's duties as commander in chief. The independent-counsel law creates a second system of criminal justice, one over which the president has little formal legal control and no politically viable control whatever. That, the Constitution does not permit.

Congressmen take their own oath to support the Constitution and may properly disagree with the Court in this matter without being chargeable with civil disobedience. They may properly take into account the law's unconstitutionality when the law comes up for reauthorization. It is one thing for Congress to exercise a power the Court has denied it, but quite another for Congress to refuse to exercise a power the Court has allowed it.

This seems to leave a gaping hole in our justice system. There is nothing between a criminal prosecution in the hands of a Justice Department already shown to be subservient to the president and an impeachment process unlikely to be successful against a popular president. If the independent-counsel law cannot save us, what could? Perhaps if the framers and ratifiers of the Constitution had anticipated a president simultaneously as popular and dishonest as Clinton, they might have arranged matters differently. Perhaps. But they did not.

Now that impeachment has failed and no indictment of the president is likely, we must learn to live with an emotionally deformed and dangerous president, a sociopath who is unable to resist immediate gratification, able to charm people for whom he cares not at all, a man who puts himself above all other causes and displays unmistakable totalitarian tendencies. Al Gore in a moment of unintended insight, said: "We can have the future we deserve because we already have the president we deserve!" As unconscious calumnies go, that one may be all too accurate.

Nevertheless, Congress should let the independent-counsel statute lapse. Were they men and women of honor, they would simultaneously adopt a resolution of thanks to Ken Starr for doing his best with a bad law. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL II ■

The Race Ace

Clinton at his most shameful.

JAY NORDLINGER

DID you know the House managers were white? Yes, they were. Lily. And if you were tempted to forget, you were reminded every two seconds by the Democrats and their cheerleaders in the media. As the ever-dependable Eleanor Clift put it, "All they were missing was white sheets." They were like "night riders." (Clift, mind you, is one of the whitest women who ever lived.)

So you hadn't realized the Clinton scandal was about race? You weren't paying attention. From the beginning, this affair was soaked in race, like everything else in America, no matter how far afield it would seem to the tranquil mind. Black political leaders made it that way. So, to an extent, did white demagogues on the Democratic left. But Bill Clinton, more than anyone else, is responsible. He plays race as shrewdly as any other southern governor. He's not a boob, like his predecessor in Arkansas, Orval Faubus. But at least as much as Faubus, he knows the nasty magic of black and white, and, healer though he likes to imagine himself, he has used his presidency to aggravate the country's racial sores.

Whenever Clinton gets into trouble, he reaches for black people, as if for a

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shield. On the very first weekend of the Monica mess, he called Jesse Jackson, his old rival, to invite him to watch the Super Bowl. The two of them, Jackson said, "had prayer." Then Jackson "had prayer" with Chelsea Clinton. Before you knew it, he had become part of the family. Jackson also got hold of Betty Currie, who was feared to be wavering, not yet committed to the cover-up. He urged her to choose "prayer over panic." White House aides were sure to inform the media just how grateful the Clintons were to their handy rev.

Day by day, color wormed its way into the drama. Reporters noted the special enthusiasm of black congressmen at the State of the Union address. Vernon Jordan, the presidential fixer, reminded everyone of his civil-rights struggles. Black lawyers were everywhere: Jordan himself, of course; Frank Carter, to whom he had driven Miss Monica; and several others. (This was a year before Cheryl Mills pulled her Selma act on the Senate floor.) Clinton aides, off the record, crowed about the blackness of the federal grand jury.

In March, there was the famous Africa trip, on which Clinton lugged his so-critical secretary, Currie, along with virtually every other prominent black person in the country. (One of them was Tom Joyner, the black-radio star, who had placed Clinton in his "Adulterers Hall of Fame.") In South Africa, Clinton wrapped himself around Nelson Mandela, literally and otherwise, to deliver an unmistakable message: Our struggle is one; the hating Right has always sought to persecute the loving Left; we shall—one day, preferably before the dress is discovered and tested—overcome.

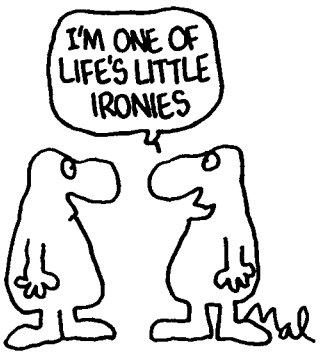
Soon, Clinton took on the status of martyr in black America, a position he did nothing to discourage. Joyner's and other black talk shows began to portray him as another O. J. Simpson (and this was meant flatteringly). Charlie Rangel and many others compared him to Martin Luther King, who had been hounded by J. Edgar Hoover with sex tapes—just like Linda Tripp's. Black politicians and writers spoke incessantly of a "lynch mob." Toni Morrison pronounced Clinton "our first black president." Joseph Lowery offered, "It's the saxophone: The man has soul." It was left to the Harvard psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint to explain that black people "circulate rumors that Clinton has black ancestry," so powerful is his bond with them.

Clinton obviously reveled in this, as, for a liberal of his type, there is no higher validation of goodness than the approval of black people. It washes away every complaint. In myriad ways, Clinton linked the cause of his political survival to the cause of black progress, warning of the social night that would fall if his enemies triumphed over him. After his semi-confession speech in August, he traveled to a black church to praise his "God of second chances." Everybody sang "We Shall Overcome."

Who could oppose a president on whom black people were so keen?

When the Starr report hit Congress, the Black Caucus sprang into action. Maxine Waters said that she was "here in the name of my slave ancestors," to halt the railroading of a race hero. Jesse Jackson Jr. claimed that the Republicans wanted to impeach, not Clinton, but, among other things, "affirmative action" and "equal protection." John Lewis, invoking the authority of his genuinely heroic past, begged, "Let us act in the spirit of the Great Teacher, in the spirit of Gandhi, in the spirit of King." Thus was the moral capital of a beloved movement spent on Clinton.

As November approached, Clinton couldn't resist a little electoral mischief. His Justice Department—without a wisp of evidence—charged that Republicans were planning to "intimidate" black voters at the polls. Clinton, the Civil Rights President, huffed that "to scare people off from voting is totally abhorrent" and "un-American." In Missouri, Democrats ran an ad on black radio that went, "When you don't vote, you let another church explode. When you don't vote, you allow another cross to burn." And so on. Similar tactics were employed in other states.



Most important, Clinton granted an Election Eve interview to Tavis Smiley of Black Entertainment Television, after months of ducking the press at large. (In this, he stole a page from Simpson, who went to BET after his acquittal in Los Angeles.) Asked how his party would fare the next day, Clinton answered, "I feel good about it, but it depends upon who votes" (wink, wink). And was the impeachment drive against him fueled by conservative resentment of his closeness to black people? "It may be," Clinton reflected—just may be—"that that's a source of anger and animosity toward me." Later, Smiley remarked that Clinton had shown himself to be "an honorary brother": "He's certainly been treated like a Negro."

At last came the trial, when the managers—white, you know—went to work. Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* promptly declared that the process was rendered illegitimate by the presence of Strom Thurmond and William Rehnquist, both veterans of "the campaigns to keep the heavy boot of segregation firmly planted on the throats of black people." It was also revealed—oh, Christmas morning!—that Trent Lott and Bob Barr had addressed a Klan-like group in the South. Didn't that cinch it? How could they possibly sit in judgment of the civil-rights-loving Clinton? At a Jackson-organized rally, a Hispanic congressman, Jose Serrano, muscled into the act: "They don't want *him*," he shouted. "They want *us*!" They all sang "We Shall Overcome."

Clinton's legal team, everyone noticed, was a nicely diverse bunch. There was Mills, of course, the trump card. But also the paralyzed Charles Ruff, who in the Sixties—the Sixties, that humane decade—had contracted a disease in Africa. Africa. Where black people live. Not, say, Finland. Then Clinton (you could have seen this coming a hundred

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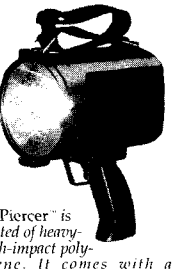

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miles away) placed Rosa Parks in his State of the Union gallery. Shortly after, he flew to Atlanta to honor another member of the pantheon, Henry Aaron, who, Clinton recalled, battled "a dark, deep undercurrent" of racism as he neared Babe Ruth's record—not unlike, lay the implication, a certain stoic president.

The coup de grâce, however, was Mills, an "African-American," she stated, in case anyone had missed it. The managers, she scolded, were "not playing fair by Mrs. Currie" (whom the Senate quailed from calling as a witness). How dare they invoke the holy name of civil rights for some big-haired trailer-park tramp! Why, Clinton's grandfather once owned a store that "catered primarily to African-Americans," and who were these crackers to convict him? "I'm not worried about civil rights," Mills said, "because this president's record on civil rights is unimpeachable." Case closed. End of discussion. Race—King Race—had won the day, as seemingly it must.

It is often said that Clinton is lucky in his enemies. Less often is it said that he is lucky in his friends. As Roger Wilkins has observed, he uses black people as props, and they, in turn, oblige him (although in one memorable instance, Tiger Woods, who despises racialism, would not). Clinton is an undisputed master of racial manipulation. He succeeded in framing his impeachment ordeal as a conflict between liberal humanity and conservative evil. He got to be what is best about his region: Atticus Finch. Who but a racist could oppose a president on whom black people were so keen?

Disgracefully, at the close of the century, race talk clogs the air. It shouldn't be so. After everything the country had endured, and gained, it hardly needed a manufactured race storm. Clinton exploited an intern for sex, arranged a cover-up, lied under oath, and obstructed justice. It had nothing—not one thing—to do with race. Race injures enough in American life without being dragged into an unrelated arena. But Clinton and his allies insisted on doing exactly that. Clinton stoked the fires of racial division for the sake of his own pasty-white skin. And that—no matter how liberal he thinks he is—is far more damnable than any depraved hijinks with an asinine girl. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL III ■

Rose Mary Currie

Clinton's enabling secretary.

KATE O'BEIRNE

'SIR, the girl is here with the pizza," Betty Currie announced to the president, ushering Monica into the Oval Office and the Lewinsky scandal into history. Bill Clinton's secretary did a lot more than help satisfy her boss's appetite for late-night snacks. Without her connivance, there might have been not much scandal at all. Still—despite her enabling role and convincing evidence that she lied repeatedly under oath—Currie, in the eyes of Washington, ends the scandal as she began it: an innocent bystander.

In those first, frenzied days, Currie huddled with prosecutors, as the press speculated that she could be the eyewitness whose testimony would doom the president. Rather than mount their typical smear campaign against a potential accuser, the White House and its allies insisted that Currie was the saintliest person in town. Had there been even the slightest chance that her testimony would damage Clinton, they would have been planting stories about mental instability or missing petty cash. Instead, she was morally irreproachable, scrupulously honest. They baited the hook, and the media bit.

Betty Currie by Sean Delonas

The papers described Currie as a "stout and churchgoing Methodist." We were told that she was "a den mother to interns," loyal, but "no Rose Mary Woods." Her "religious core" would not permit a "cover-up of untoward behavior." Even the president's critics swallowed this line, one of them condemning Clinton for abusing Currie's "innate decency" and "stern moral fabric."

Currie had worked on the Ferraro and Dukakis campaigns, in addition to being part of Clinton's Little Rock "War Room," but she was consistently painted as "nonpartisan." One ex-boss, however, has a different assessment. When Republican Tom Pauken took over as director of a federal agency in 1981, he inherited Currie as his secretary. He recalls that she was part of a "bureaucratic infrastructure of those who wanted to run the agency the way they wanted it run, regardless of the director." She was "not a naïve lady," Pauken explains, and though "she and her allies worked hard to get people to call me to keep her on," he transferred the "shrewd operator" to a different office, concluding that she was a "very manipulative personality."

After three interviews with investigators and five appearances before the grand jury, the office of independent counsel had good reason to agree. From her first interview on January 24, 1998, it was clear that Currie had no intention of being "Ken Starr's dream come true," as *Time* had predicted.

She began that day with a phone call from Jesse Jackson, prompted by the White House. She then informed her questioners that she had no memory of incriminating events. She contradicted both the later sworn testimony of others and White House phone and visitor records. She remembered only two specific visits by Monica to the president and

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couldn't recall clearing her into the White House some 26 times. She alleged that Monica called her about picking up gifts to hide, but couldn't remember where the pick-up occurred. (It was outside Monica's apartment, less than a month before.) She claimed that she decided on her own to enlist Vernon Jordan in Monica's job search. And she insisted that she answered "Right" to each of the false statements the president fed her because those statements were "basically correct." Clinton's assertion that he and Monica were never alone in the Oval Office was true, for example, because, according to Currie, he meant in "the Oval Office area."

The next day, at her second interview, Currie was asked about the incident at the White House gate, when Monica learned that Eleanor Mondale was in with the president and threw a fit. This episode led to an angry confrontation between Currie and Secret Service agents, who would testify that she was "almost crying," her "hands shaking." Currie passed it all off, however, as a "quick, casual check" into who had informed Monica about Miss Mondale.

An enduring image of this scandal is a frightened Currie leaving the courthouse, cowering before a horde of cameras and reporters. Behind closed doors, though, she had hugged the Starr prosecutor and declared the experience not as bad as she had expected. In testimony, she explained that she hadn't thought anything amiss in the relationship between Clinton and Monica, as he was "extremely gracious and outgoing to" all interns. When Monica delivered pizza to the president (and performed a sex act on him for 20 minutes as he talked to a congressman on the phone about sending American troops to Bosnia), that, Currie said, took only "a matter of 30 seconds." Time and again, she couldn't remember details that she had shared with investigators only days before. "The best I can remember, sir—and it's getting worse by the minute, seems like . . . "

During a two-day period in November 1997, when Monica was particularly frantic to see the president, she called Currie eleven times and paged her three times. Currie had no recollection of that. Nor could she remember asking Monica to wait in the White House parking lot before being escorted in. It

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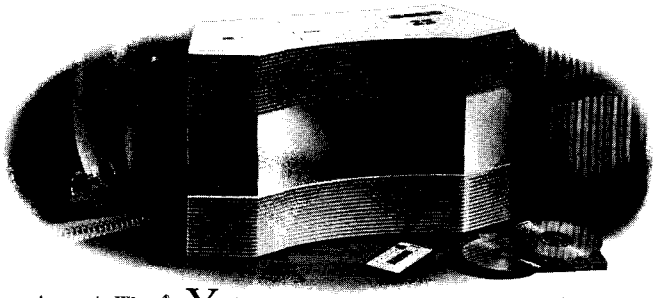

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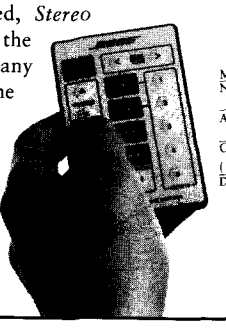

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took the prosecutor twelve questions before Currie again admitted that she may have sneaked Monica past disapproving staffers, as she had previously testified.

When *Newsweek*'s Michael Isikoff called Currie days before the scandal broke, asking about courier receipts from packages that Monica had sent through her, she contacted Vernon Jordan—rather than any of her White House colleagues. She made shorthand notes about the Isikoff call, writing "situation serious." When asked to read her own notes, she thought she might have written "situation series."

During her many grand-jury appearances, Currie was alternately befuddled and defiantly sarcastic. When asked whether Clinton had tried hard to bring Monica back to work at the White House after the 1996 election, she answered, "He did not call out the National Guard." When asked why she had paged Monica four times in three hours, following Clinton's Paula Jones deposition, she retorted, "Four little bitty times." When asked about Monica's addressing Clinton as "Handsome," she replied, "We call Mr. Emmick [a Starr prosecutor] 'Handsome.'"

By her final appearance in July, Currie could no longer remember that she used to come into the White House on weekends for the sole purpose of admitting Monica to the Oval Office. She could no longer remember that the gifts she picked up from Monica were from Clinton. The lies were laughably transparent. What about the time that she waited in the president's private dining room as a beard (because others had seen Monica enter the Oval Office) while the president deposited DNA on Monica's dress in the hallway? Asked an incredulous juror, "So even though you were in the dining room, you could see them standing in the hallway? They never went into the study out of eyesight?" Answered Currie: "Never out of eyesight."

She told the jury, "I'm taking this St. John's Wort trying to help me remember, but it's not." Asked which version of her testimony was to be believed, she stated, "I hope there would be no inconsistency," that "they would all jive correctly."

Jive is exactly what describes both Betty Currie's testimony and her spectacularly unmerited reputation. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL IV ■

Sid 'n' Hitch

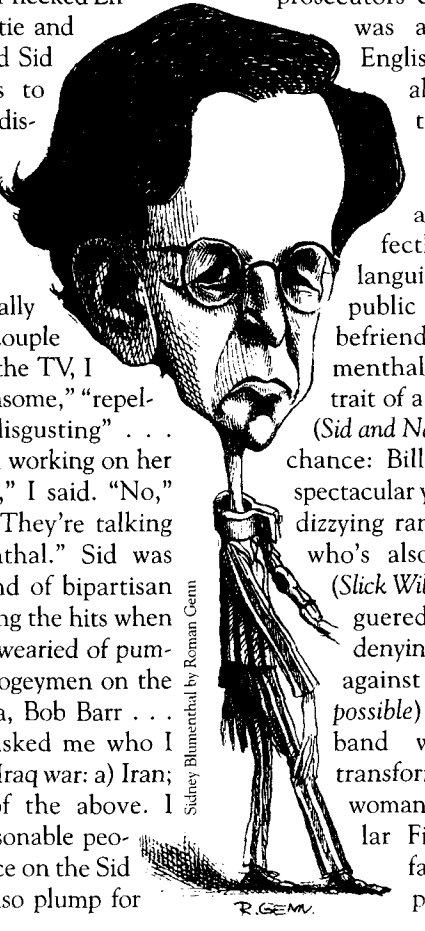
Two famous lefties duke it out.

MARK STEYN

SOMEHOW I never thought the trial of the President of the United States would dwindle down to . . . Christopher Hitchens. But, amazingly, it did: The very last item of business before Sens. Lott and Daschle presented the chief justice with that Shriner of the Month award was the request by the majority leader that Hitchens's affidavit be entered into the record. As we now know, the *Vanity Fair* columnist had lunched with his friend Sidney Blumenthal, and in the course of the meal, somewhere between the maitre d' bringing the perpetually open-necked Englishman a mandatory tie and an unstained jacket and Sid announcing his plans to bomb the Sudan, the indispensable White House supremo launched into his Monica-the-sex-crazed-stalker routine.

Poor Hitch never really knew what hit him. A couple of days earlier, passing the TV, I caught the words "loathsome," "repellent," "obnoxious," "disgusting" . . . "Dianne Feinstein's still working on her censure motion, I see," I said. "No," replied my assistant. "They're talking about Sidney Blumenthal." Sid was gamely carrying his end of bipartisan media scorn alone, taking the hits when the press momentarily wearied of pummeling the legions of bogeymen on the other side—Ken, Linda, Bob Barr . . . Years ago, a pollster asked me who I wanted to win the Iran/Iraq war: a) Iran; b) Iraq; c) neither of the above. I assumed that most reasonable people, invited to pronounce on the Sid 'n' Hitch war, would also plump for (c). But within 24 hours Washington had decided Hitchens was Linda Tripp in drag—for, under the Clintonian moral code, betraying a lunch date is far worse than betraying your wife, your child, your intern, your cabinet, your fellow Americans, your oath to the chief justice, etc. Just as the president was calling for an end to the politics of personal destruction on the grounds that there was no one left worth personally destroying, along comes a convenient new villain—and English to boot: You don't have to be a constitutional scholar with a regular slot on *CNN TalkBack Live* with Bobbie Battista to know what the Framers felt about those guys.

But the House managers rushed to Hitchens like drowning men clutching at a straw. It was the day the Academy Award nominations were announced in Hollywood, which only underlined the desperation. Nothing can stop the box-office blockbuster: Faced with a crack platoon of star Democrats determined to rescue an innocent young man under fire for inappropriate personal wrongdoing (*Saving Private Lyin'*), the best the pitifully low-budget-independent House prosecutors could come up with was an obscure upscale English bit-part player, already being set up for the sinister duplicitous Brit role (Jeremy Irons being unavailable). Hitch was perfectly adequate as the languid, effete upper-class public schoolboy who befriends Vicious Sid Blumenthal in the searing portrait of a doomed relationship (*Sid and Nancy*). But he hasn't a chance: Bill Clinton has had a spectacular year, acclaimed for his dizzying range—the boy genius who's also a great romantic (*Slick Will Hunting*); the beleaguered hero vigorously denying the DNA evidence against him (*Emission: Impossible*); the devoted husband whose philandering transforms an unlikable woman into the most popular First Lady since her famously cheated-on predecessor (*Hillary*



Sidney Blumenthal by Roman Genn

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and Jackie). Just as Tom Hanks is a sure-fire bet for Best Part in an International Mega-hit, so Bill Clinton is unbeatable when it comes to Best Part in an Intern . . . hang on, this metaphor's getting out of hand. But my point's a simple one: You're never going to slay Bill Clinton with Christopher Hitchens.

As a journalist, he's famous for his ferocious denunciation of that reviled figure Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Distinguished NATIONAL REVIEW contributors such as Taki despise him for this, but Mother Teresa was a public figure,

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Within 24 hours Washington had decided Hitchens was Linda Tripp in drag.

■

and one is tempted to suggest that, if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the black hole of Calcutta. Indeed, by the end, Henry Hyde was flailing so desperately in his subpoena requests, I'm surprised she wasn't on the list: "This Mother Teresa! What does she have to tell us? Did the president deliberately trash her to Sidney Blumenthal knowing that Blumenthal would pass it on to his friend Christopher Hitchens knowing that Hitchens would launch a vicious attack on her in *Vanity Fair*? The president himself has admitted he told Blumenthal: 'She's a bent, wizened old lady with no dress sense hung up on alleviating poverty in the Indian subcontinent. She's not my type.' We need to talk to her."

But Hitchens's media pals were relaxed about his viciousness until he turned on Clinton: It's one thing to attack a woman with a stoop in a wimple and habit, quite another to attack a wimp with a habit of getting women to stoop. His chums assumed his assaults on the president–abuser were part of some kinky campaign of belated revenge for George III. But I remember meeting Hitchens in the Rainbow Room in New York years ago in the week that Paula

Mr. Steyn is a columnist for Britain's *Daily Telegraph* and Canada's *National Post*.

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Jones first spoke up. "I have no reason to believe Mrs. Jones is lying," he drawled—in striking contrast to the cold shoulder given her by the rest of the media—and he has maintained that quaintly honorable position as Paula was supplanted by Monica and then Kathleen. If you'll forgive a gratuitous racist slur, Blumenthal and Hitchens represent the extremes of the American and British journalistic traditions: Sid the suck-up who wants an invite to the embassy balls; Chris the contrarian who gets in to Kay Graham's dinner party only to pass out in the soup and throw up on the rug. I know which tradition is the healthier, especially in a Washington media culture of stultifying respectability. It's a sad comment on liberal journalism that the only left-wing writer in the United States who has taken a consistent, coherent stand against this president is an English public schoolboy: If the Battle of Whitewaterloo is ever won, it too will be on the playing fields of Eton. NR

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■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Apolitical Animals

What GOP agenda?

RAMESH PONNURU

FOR two months, the mantra of Republicans has been that impeachment would fade in the public memory once they started passing their agenda. The rub is that they don't have an agenda, certainly not one that polls as well as President Clinton's. And even if they devise one, their tiny six-seat margin in the House and the timorousness of their Senate caucus will make it hard to get much conservative legislation to Clinton's desk. Republicans worry about whether they can keep control of Congress after the 2000 elections. But as long as a handful of Republican defectors can determine the balance of power, the bigger question is whether they can keep control of Congress *until* 2000.

Yet bleak as the GOP's short-term prospects appear, the conservative future looks even worse. For reasons that include tactical mistakes, escapist misadventures, factional infighting, the temper of the times, and their own success in tugging the GOP to the right, conservatives now enjoy less influence on the party's agenda than at any other point since the mid '70s. Indeed, it is the weakness and confusion of conservatives (who normally provide the party's energy and direction) and not, as they imagine, the spinelessness of party leaders that largely explains the GOP's current travails. It is quite conceivable that the party will find a way to prosper by shucking the unpopular or difficult portions of the conservative agenda.

But there must *be* a conservative agenda. The problem is not that conservatives often disagree among themselves on issues like Internet censorship or intervention in Kosovo; there is still a

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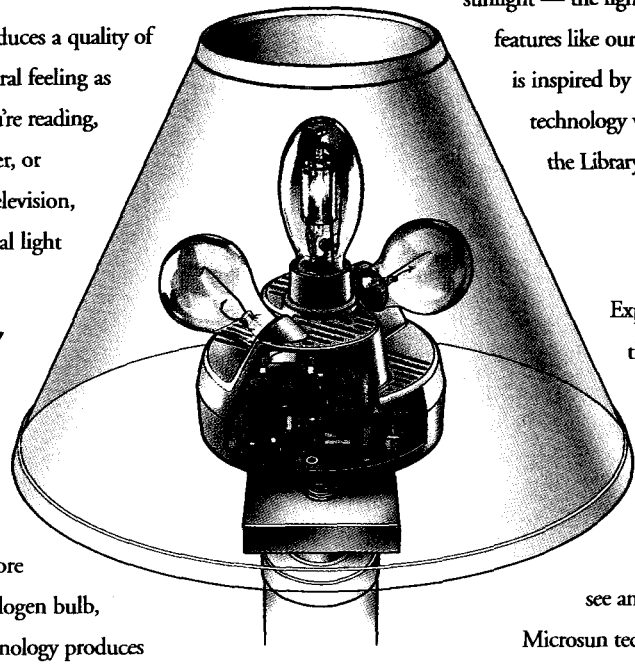

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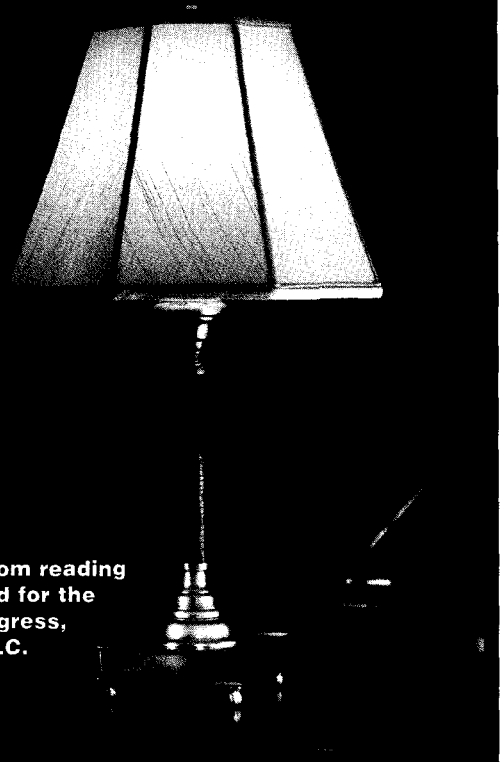

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long list of policies that would gain the enthusiastic assent of almost all conservatives. But it is a list largely generated by think tanks, and the conservative movement has lately lacked any ability to prioritize among agenda items according to their intrinsic or strategic importance.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than on taxes. There is a great deal of programmatic agreement here: Almost all conservatives would be happy to see tax rates cut, the lowest tax bracket widened, the multiple taxation of savings eliminated, etc. It's when conservatives move to the question of which idea to push next that consensus collapses. And so priorities get set on the basis of coalition management. The farmers want estate-tax relief, so that's item 15 on the congressional agenda. Republican tax policy, which used to be about uniting large segments of the public against overgovernment, is now arguably more driven by special interests than the Democrats' middle-class tax breaks.

This leads to such absurdities as the Republicans' drive to eliminate the "marriage penalty" (the difference between what some joint filers pay in taxes and what they would pay filing singly). This is a purely symbolic move. Cohabiting couples—half of whom get married or split up within two years, and 90 percent within five—are not a major threat to the family. Nor is ending the marriage tax likely to yield political benefits just because it's popular: Social-conservative groups were never able to muster grassroots enthusiasm for the child-tax credit, and Republicans never got much applause for passing it.

The marriage tax is the kind of anomaly that you don't even notice until it's pointed out. But then, a lot of conservative causes these days are fairly abstract. This tendency reached a comic apogee during the winter of 1995–96, when the free-market think tank Citizens for a Sound Economy was issuing triangular buttons urging a balanced budget, within seven years, certified by the Congressional Budget Office: a kind of holy trinity for policy wonks. The flat tax has the same failing. It's theoretically elegant, but not a response to any pressing need. It's a way, rather, to attain several goals at once—reducing the tax code's progressivity, complexity, and bias against savings—without having to set priorities among them. This anti-political approach to policy carries political costs. On education, for instance, Republicans are still besotted with reducing duplicative bureaucracy and paperwork. A nice idea, but why should anyone care?

A truly political conservatism would begin not with a set of policy prescriptions but with an accurate appraisal of the American condition. It could then identify, and put at the top of its agenda, those issues that simply must be addressed now for the good of the country. Welfare reform was arguably such an issue in 1995; rebuilding our defenses is one today. But there aren't many such issues. More typical is an issue like overregulation. It's frustrating, diminishes our liberties, breeds an excessive aversion to risk, and often violates democratic norms. But much about it can also be safely put off until conservatives have more seats in Congress and an ally in the White House.

A successful political movement creates the conditions for its own success. The reforms it demands now are designed to make it easier to accomplish the rest of its agenda later. Political parties don't need much instruction on what this means electorally: They craft agendas with an eye to maximizing their showing in the next election. But winning elections isn't the only way to gain ground.

Victories can be won in the future by changing the rules of politics in the present. Hence the importance anti-tax activists attach to requiring supermajorities to raise taxes. If Republicans pick up seats in Congress and win the White House, they could also rework a budget process now stacked in favor of domestic spending and against tax cuts. Eliminating the federal subsidies that fuel much left-wing advocacy, if achievable, would be more worthwhile than ending a more expensive program.

Neither GOP officials nor conservative activists seem able to fathom the final, and possibly the key, method of improving the political terrain: using policy to change the electorate itself. President Clinton understands it. His policies—speeding up and dumbing down naturalization, cutting military personnel, hiring more public-school teachers—seem expressly designed to alter the political composition of the nation. Some liberals openly defended Clinton's health-care plan as a massive exercise in applied political demographics: It would have increased middle-class dependence on government, and thus on the party of government. His tax policies are also cleverly geared to changing the interests of broad classes of people. As rising incomes push millions of people into higher tax brackets, a proliferation of tax credits practically eliminates tax payments for millions of others. The electorate moves toward the tipping point where a majority of the population can vote to help themselves to other people's money.

Conservatives ought to follow Clinton's example. They should use the demographic impact of policies as a criterion for setting priorities. Any number of public-school reforms might be good ideas, for instance, but private-school choice might increase the number of Republican parents. The most important demographic opportunity beckoning, however, is the rapid expansion of the investor class. Common sense suggests that this trend will yield dramatic benefits for Republicans. So do the limited polling data available.

This way of thinking has clear implications for deciding which tax cuts conservatives ought to push hardest. Indexing the tax brackets for economic growth would put a halt to Clinton's money machine. And the liberalized IRAs proposed by Sen. Bill Roth, the Delaware Republican, would expand the investor class; in fact, Republicans might even want to consider adopting (and adapting) Clinton's idea of government-matched 401(k)s for everyone, the so-called USA accounts. The biggest pay-off, as conservatives and liberals understand reasonably well, would come from replacing retirees' government checks with the returns to their own investments. Social Security privatization would transform American politics for generations.

Which highlights another strategic imperative: Conservatives should do nothing—nothing—that hurts Republicans' chances of winning the White House in 2000. **NR**

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■ SCIENCE ■

Remains of the Day

Politics buries a key archeological find.

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN the Army Corps of Engineers couldn't make one of North America's most exciting archeological finds go away, it decided to perform a massive cover-up operation. Literally. First it dumped 500 tons of rock and gravel from helicopters onto the Columbia River discovery site. Then the Corps layered the shoreline near Kennewick, Wash., with more than 300 tons of dirt and logs. Finally, it planted thousands of trees on top of the remade terrain, once a muddy beach. "The Corps destroyed as much as possible as fast as possible," says geologist Tom Stafford. "It's like they hit it with a nuclear bomb."

A group of scientists tried to stop the Corps. Two lawsuits were filed. Even Congress got involved. But the Corps—perhaps acting on orders from the White House—plowed away. As it buried the site last April, a group of American Indian activists looked on with approval, listening to the ceremonial taps of a tribal drum-beater. The fight over Kennewick Man, as the ancient human remains found beside the Columbia River are popularly known, by then had become a cause célèbre for both sides. Although Kennewick Man represents an invaluable opportunity to learn about ancient migration into the New World, his bones are currently locked away in a museum unexamined, a victim of conscious neglect, bureaucratic ineptitude, and political meddling.

In July 1996, two college students were walking along the river when they spotted a human skull sticking out of the earth. They contacted the police, and

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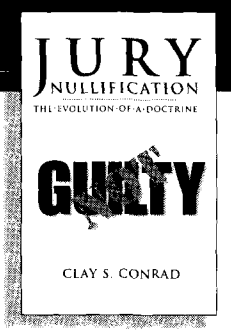
What Everyone Should Know about the Powers of the Jury



Central to the history of trial by jury is the right of jurors to vote "not guilty" if the law is unjust or unjustly applied. When jurors acquit a factually guilty defendant, we say that the jury "nullified" the law. The Founding Fathers believed that juries in criminal trials had a role to play as the conscience of the community, and relied on juries' nullifying to hold the government to the principles of the Constitution. Yet this power of jurors has been derided and ignored by American courts, to the point that today few jurors are aware that an important part of their role is, in the words of the Supreme Court, to "prevent oppression by the government." **311 pp./$22.50 paper**

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that evening local forensics expert James Chatters was asked to retrieve the remains. The bones looked fresh, says Chatters, but soil stuck to them—suggesting that they had been in the riverbank for a while. Back at his lab, he noted the skull's Caucasoid features. "I thought we had found an early European settler," he says. The county coroner requested radiocarbon dating. The shocking results: The skeleton, almost 90 percent complete, was nearly 10,000 years old.

That wasn't supposed to happen. Kennewick Man doesn't look like a modern American Indian. His skull is long rather than short, and his face is narrow and prognathic instead of broad and flat. He lacks other features, such as shovel-shaped incisors, that are generally associated with the Mongoloid peoples of Asia who are conventionally believed to have populated North and South America. Several fringe groups have mistakenly suggested that Kennewick Man was white. But nobody knows the color of Kennewick Man's skin, or much else for that matter. The only sure thing is that his remains show that the original settlement of the western hemisphere was more complicated than once imagined. And that bothers an outspoken clique of Indian activists.

Before researchers could conduct a full investigation on Kennewick Man, the Corps seized the remains. They acted on behalf of five local tribes, which claimed a right to the bones under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act passed by Congress in 1990. The Indians wanted to rebury Kennewick Man, and the Corps was going to let them. "From our oral histories, we know that our people have been part of this land from the beginning of time," explained Armand Minthorn of the Umatillas. "We do not believe that our people migrated here from another continent, as the scientists do."

The scientists, of course, have long believed that American Indians are descended from people who crossed a Bering Strait landbridge. Kennewick Man doesn't necessarily challenge the Asian source, but he does speak to the fascinating complexity of ancient demography. The remains potentially point to a tumultuous and violent past that contradicts the *Dances with Wolves* image of ecologically sensitive, peace-loving victims of white conquest.

The Corps quickly complied with the Indians' demands—perhaps because it was eager to use the remains as a bargaining chip in its constant treaty negotiations with tribes over salmon fishing, waste disposal, and other matters. Indeed, an internal memo circulated at the time mentions the Corps' overpowering political incentive to heed the tribes' demand: "All risk to us seems to be associated with not repatriating the remains."

The remains fell victim to terrible mismanagement, and perhaps even sabotage.

Not quite. The Corps came under withering criticism in the local community and, increasingly, in the national media. Eight prominent scientists sued the Corps for the right to study the remains, and a judge halted plans to give Kennewick Man to the tribes. Several months later, he ordered the Corps to reevaluate its actions, and it looked like the scientists were going to have their day in the lab. Then the remains fell victim to terrible mismanagement, and perhaps even sabotage.

The first bad sign was a Corps plan to "preserve" the riverbank where Kennewick Man was discovered by burying it beneath hundreds of tons of riprap. Corps spokesmen claimed that they needed to protect it from erosion. That attracted the attention of Rep. Doc Hastings, Republican of Washington, who had been following the case in the press and once lived within view of the Kennewick Man site. "That part of the river isn't even free-flowing—it's part of a lake behind a dam," he says. "There's no significant erosion." In an added wrinkle, the Corps' own research team advised against this "stabilization" effort.

Hastings amended an appropriations bill to prevent the Corps from moving forward. Similar language passed the Senate, and on March 31, 1998, the Corps said that it would not touch the site. The next day, however, Congress went out of session without reconciling the two bills. At the close of business, Hastings received word from Lt. Gen. Joe Ballard that the Corps would indeed go ahead with its dumping operation. Within two weeks, the Kennewick Man site and whatever secrets it still held lay beneath piles of rubble. Corps documents, including a Nov. 28, 1997, letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service, say that "concern on the part of the White House" led to the Corps' dubious erosion-control plan. Nobody in the Clinton administration, however, can explain the nature of this "concern."

Then, Kennewick Man himself started to disappear. Before he was transferred to Seattle's Burke Museum last fall, the Corps had been holding him in a poor state of storage. Kennewick Man was a real-life skeleton in a closet, and the Corps' own curation report noted that some fragments were even kept in a brown paper bag. Meanwhile, the Corps had secretly permitted Indians to perform religious ceremonies with the remains. Worse yet, in court documents filed last May the Corps admitted that a portion of the remains were "unintentionally turned over to the tribes." They were buried and no attempt has been made to recover them.

Finally, during an October inventory, the Smithsonian Institution's Douglas Owsley discovered more pieces missing. The two femur bones—valuable to researchers because they reveal height, age, and other important characteristics—were both originally found in six fragments, but only one of each is left. A furious Owsley calls the situation "a deliberate act of desecration." The Interior Department, which assumed responsibility for the case last year from the Corps, says it will conduct tests on Kennewick Man within the next few weeks, but the scientists now wonder how much information has been lost forever.

They are hoping Kennewick Man doesn't ultimately go the way of the so-called Buhl Woman, nearly 11,000 years old, whose remains were reburied by the Shoshone-Bannock tribe in Idaho without extensive study. According to scientists who had limited access to her bones, she may have displayed features similar to Kennewick Man. Then there's the case of Nevada's 9,400-year-old Spirit Cave Mummy, another ancient skeleton with Caucasoid-like features

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whose thorough examination has been blocked repeatedly by the Bureau of Land Management.

Remains that old are extremely rare, making each one a priceless discovery for the scientists who probe them. Because of fiascos like Kennewick Man, however, there may not be anybody to do the research in the future. Robson Bonnichsen of Oregon State University worries that graduate students won't want to study prehistoric America because of the legal hassles. "We're going to lose talented young people," he says. "Our ability to know what happened here long ago will vanish."

Maybe that's the point. **NR**

■ ABROAD ■

Turkey's New Day

Power politics changes in the Middle East.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE shifting and perfidious politics of the Middle East are throwing up something new: Turkey is coming into its own. During the dark days of the Cold War, the Turks were eager defenders of their long border with the Soviet Union. They took membership in NATO seriously. With a population approaching 70 million, democratic and secular at least nominally, they saw themselves as Westerners. When the Soviet Union disappeared as though at the wave of a magic wand, Turkey was an outright winner, recovering a freedom of action that does justice to its position and power in the surrounding region. Like June, in the lyric of Oscar Hammerstein, Turkey has been busting out all over. New alliances follow and

Mr. Pryce-Jones is a London-based journalist and scholar whose books include *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs.*

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What are the facts?

Victimized by Arab Myths. Israel is the only country in the world whose "right to exist", has always been questioned. From its very beginning, Israel was surrounded by mortal enemies,single-mindedly obsessed with its destruction. The very day of its birth, six Arab armies invaded the newborn state. Miraculously, the invading hordes were defeated by the ragtag Israeli army.

In 1967, the same aggressors launched another attack against Israel. The Six-Day War resulted in a complete rout of the Arabs, and a victory for Israeli arms that will be studied in war colleges for centuries to come.

Unable to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, the Arabs launched a propaganda war that has been very successful, and which the Jews have clearly lost. Among the many myths propagated by the Arabs are that there is such a thing as a "Palestinian nation" (it's a concept that is not more than 40 years old); that the Israelis (Jews) are "occupiers" (if they were, who would be the sovereign that they displaced?); that Jerusalem is Islam's "third holiest city" (it's never once mentioned in the Koran, but hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible); the concept of "settlements" (with its connotation of illegality); and much more.

Israel — Utterly Vulnerable. These and other myths are what fuel the insistence of the Arabs, of most of the world, and, yes, also of the United States, that Israel allow itself to be dismembered. All concerned know well that Israel would be utterly indefensible, at the mercy of its implacable enemies, if it were to divest itself of the Jordan Valley, of the "West Bank", of the Gaza Strip, and of the Golan Heights. Why then does the world insist that Israel make itself so utterly vulnerable? Does anybody really believe that the "Palestinians", or any of the Arabs, would be appeased, even if Israel were to yield everything, except perhaps Tel Aviv and its suburbs? Everybody knows the answer. It would be an emphatic "NO", because the very existence of Israel, in whatever reduced territory, is an intolerable insult to the Muslim Arabs, for whom Israel must be rubbed out regardless of the sacrifices to be brought.

> "By its pious insistence on 'justice for the Palestinians' and pursuit of the 'peace process', by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust."

Why does the world focus on the spurious claims of the "Palestinians", an artificially created nationality that never in recorded history had an identity or country of their own? Why is there no clamor that the French and Spanish give an independent country to their Basque minorities? How about the Kurds? How about the Tibetans; and so many others? Nobody cares. Nobody wants to "liberate" them. It's only the Jews who are being asked to dismember their tiny country, less than half of the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The Arab countries (and Iran) are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only—namely the destruction of Israel. Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities, and millions of Arab casualties, would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them, it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered, with five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, can anybody really doubt that a second Holocaust, even more terrible than the first one, is just about upon us? By its pious insistence on "justice for the Palestinians" and pursuit of the "peace process", by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust. Deep down inside, does the world really want the Jews to live or to disappear?

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ancient enmities revive as the ground quakes under the neighbors' feet.

In the post-Soviet world, the first priority of successive Turkish governments was to join as early as possible the emerging European federal union. Genuine obstacles exist. Frail at the best of times, Turkish democracy goes hand in hand with military coups. As much as a quarter of the electorate votes for the rather ominously named Virtue Party, in reality the Muslim fundamentalists. Although they present themselves as tolerant, their democratic credentials are hardly convincing. And down in the southeast, close to Syria, are the Kurds, some of whom were once backed by Moscow. Turkish governments have long denied them their legitimate human rights, and as a result some Kurds now resort to terrorism with the aim of establishing a separate state of their own. Without any finesse, the Turkish response is to crack down hard on all Kurds irrespective.

Animated by hopes of revenge on the Turks for past ills, real or imaginary, Greece opposes Turkish entry into the European Union, and so does Germany, which has some 2 million Turkish-immigrant laborers to whom it denies some important civil rights. None of the Europeans dare tell the truth, which is that their prospective union is protectionist in every sense and that they are racists and bigots who refuse to admit the Turks simply because they are Muslims.

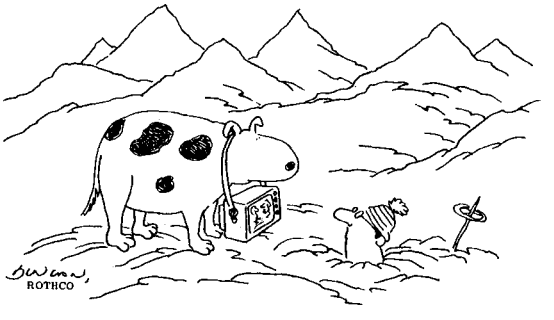
Anger at this humiliating rejection is redirecting Turkish energies. Their first and perhaps most inviting new sphere of influence was Central Asia. Destitute after the experience of Communism, this vast dust bowl is divided into tribal societies, which in a spirit of grandiose wish-fulfillment have declared themselves independent republics. Huge and widespread deposits of oil and natural gas one day must bring wealth-creation and social modernization.

Most of these peoples are Turkic, ethnically and linguistically related. Others, though, are Farsi-speakers, related to Iran. Turkey and Iran both sought to build on these links and so maximize their political and economic influence. Turks are Sunni, Iranians are Shia, and for centuries they competed in order to be the paramount Muslim power, mutually weakening each other in the process. Into the post-Soviet vacuum in Central Asia, then, rushed this historic rivalry, too bitter and sectarian for compromise. Turkish secularism and democracy, however incomplete, today offer a value system in complete opposition to the Iranian dictatorship of the ayatollahs.

In two or three years, Iran will have a nuclear weapon, whose most likely target is Israel. My enemy's enemy is my friend. The peace process between Israel and the Palestinians encouraged the Turks to go further and enroll Israel as an ally, informally but effectively. Fear of Iran is a very real common interest between these two states, one which for the Turks easily outweighs Islamic solidarity. In July 1996, Islamic fundamentalists under Necmettin Erbakan formed a government in Istanbul and began to speak about Israel in the time-honored vocabulary as "a cancer in the heart of the Arab and Muslim world." The Turkish army, especially its officer corps, is a secular force. Before Erbakan could change policy towards Israel, the generals deftly ousted him.

In two or three years, Iran will have a nuclear weapon, whose most likely target is Israel.

By now, Turkey and Israel have signed 13 accords, involving trade, tourism, water, agriculture, anti-terrorism, the exchange of intelligence, and above all military training. Ministers and chiefs of staff publicize their official visits. Turkish naval vessels put in at Israeli ports. Israeli jets now fly in Turkish airspace from local bases, and presumably they are practicing dry-run attacks on Iranian nuclear installations.



Most Arabs exaggerate these Turkish–Israeli ties as an alliance aimed at them. In particular, Syria has territorial claims to make against Turkey, and against Israel, which in the Six Day War of 1967 captured the Golan Heights. Seeing itself pincered, Syria clings to Iran, somewhat helplessly because its population of Sunnis and Alawis is unable to meet the religious criteria of Iranian fundamentalism. Resenting Turkey and Israel and the Kurds who trouble him too, Saddam Hussein is also edging towards Iran. President Mubarak of Egypt utters sibylline warnings. Jordan alone, under the late King Hussein, was prepared to be positive about the Turkish–Israeli axis. Once more, my enemy's enemy is my friend. Syria and Iraq both have ambitions to take Jordan over by fair means or foul. In the last resort, the guarantee of continuing Jordanian independence is the lock that Israel and Turkey have on the present volatile position.

Israel has over and over proved itself able and willing to take military action in defense of its vital interests. Turkey is no less determined. Twice within the last three months, Turkey has threatened to go to war, and would almost certainly have done so if its demands had not been met in time, and in full. The first instance was against Syria, as a function of the Kurdish question. President Hafez Assad had invited Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of Kurdish extremists, to take up headquarters in Damascus. Armed and subsidized by Syria, Ocalan was conducting his separatist campaign at long distance. As the Turks mobilized in strength on the Syrian border, Assad prudently sent Ocalan into exile and closed down his own part in this terrorism by proxy.

The second instance was perhaps more dire, involving Cyprus. In 1996, the government of the Greek part of the divided island put in an order to Russia for an anti-aircraft missile system. Once in place, this system would deprive the Turks of air supremacy and alter the balance

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of power by leaving the Turkish part of Cyprus at the mercy of the Greeks. The Turks always made it clear that they would oppose this, and that in the event of a clash they would hold responsible those who ordered these weapons. At the beginning of this year, Russian ships with the missiles on board reached the Greek harbor of Piraeus. At the last minute, the Greek government diverted the missiles from Cyprus and instead placed them under its own control on Crete.

Here, then, are two wars that did not take place. That is good news. But there is no shortage of issues in the Middle East that at any moment can erupt into local or regional war. On the whole, the Turkish–Israeli axis seems likely to provide a more lasting impetus to peace than any other conceivable combination of states, but of course it might oblige Greeks and Arabs and Iranians to form a contrary bloc. Such is the fluid aftermath of the Cold War. This is best expressed in a less complacent way: If great powers will not impose peace in circumstances of unavoidable conflict, lesser powers must do it for themselves. **NR**

■ **CULTURE WATCH** ■

Pillars of Salt Lake

The meaning of the Olympics scandal.

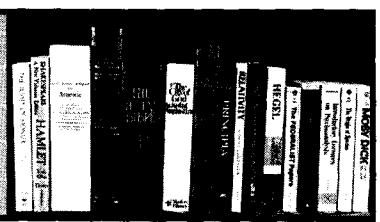
CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

ACCORDING to Deedee Corradini, Democratic mayor of Salt Lake City, people are asking: "How could it happen here, with our high moral standards?" Not really, Deedee: In the wake of the biggest bribery scandal in Olympic history, people are asking if there's a businessman in the whole state of Utah whom you'd trust as far as you could shot-put him.

The 2002 Winter Olympics, awarded to Salt Lake four years ago, are expected to bring the town $2.8 billion in business. This meant big incentives to influence the site-selection process of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)—and Salt Lake's organizing committee (SLOC) proved ill-equipped to resist them. In January, when the scandal broke, it looked like SLOC had paid off 13 of the 114 IOC members with $393,000, mostly in "scholarships and stipends" for family members. By the end of the month, the figure had risen to $800,000, with real cash bribes, and U.S. Olympic Committee member Alfredo La Mont had resigned amid allegations he took "consulting" fees to clue SLOC in on which IOC people were buyable. By early February, we were at $1.3 million for 24 members—a fifth of the IOC. And rising. While the FBI, Customs, the IRS, the Justice Department, and Congress are all investigating, no one with subpoena power has yet laid out the quids and quos.

Mr. Caldwell is senior writer for *The Weekly Standard* and a columnist for the *New York Press*.

SUMMER GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
August 1 - 13, 1999



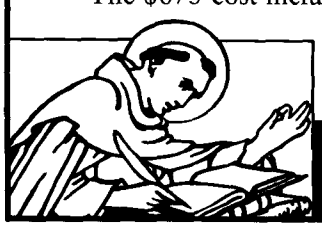
Designed for students who have completed at least three years of high school, this program offers an opportunity to exercise the mind, the spirit and the body. The classes will be conducted, as all classes at Thomas Aquinas College, using the Socratic method of discussion. These will be guided by full-time faculty of the College, with no more than fifteen students.

The two week course includes Sophocles' *Antigone*, the *Crito* of Plato, the *Declaration of Independence*, and readings from *Genesis*, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, Shakespeare, Euclid, Pascal, C.S. Lewis and more.

Mass will be celebrated daily, and at least one chaplain will be available on campus at all times.

Intense thinking should be tempered with rest and play, and the location of the College is ideal for recreation of all sorts. Besides daily sports, an occasional movie, and hiking in the hills surrounding the campus, there will be trips to such places as Los Angeles to attend a concert or visit a museum, and to Santa Barbara to enjoy the beach and the historical sites of the city.

The $675 cost includes housing, meals, books and organized activities off campus.



Contact Thomas J. Susanka, Director of Admissions.
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THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

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Businessman Mitt Romney—son of longtime Michigan governor George, 1994 Senate challenger to Ted Kennedy, and perhaps the only Mormon in Massachusetts—has been called in to reform the committee and save the Games. At a February meeting, he and Utah's Republican governor, Mike Leavitt, gave board members who stand to profit from the Olympics 60 days to resign. Within minutes they were dropping like flies. So much for Earl Holding (Mayor Corradini's biggest campaign contributor), since SLOC is paying $13.8 million to his Snowbasin ski resort. And so much for Alan Layton, whose company will get $29 million to put a roof on the local speedskating rink.

SLOC chalked up the "mistakes" to a few rogue elements, heaving overboard two committee members: ex-president Tom Welch and ex-veep David Johnson. Both Welch and Johnson claim the bid committee's work was all done in public, but Johnson didn't help their case any when he physically attacked a camera crew that showed up to ask him a few questions.

Press reaction to the SLOC report was lukewarm. The assistance was in a gray area between ethical and unethical, the *New York Times* reported. That's right. Welch compared it to a political campaign, and it certainly did resemble recent ones. SLOC got the daughter of South Korea's Kim Un Yong a $5,000 contract to play for the Utah Symphony. It also bought a forestry study from the Finnish enviro (and husband of an IOC member) Bjarne Haeggman for what looks like $33,000—and never read it. It paid full-boat scholarships to state universities for various Africans (all IOC relatives), circumventing admissions procedures.

You can see the trick they were trying to pull: Money for the arts! The environment! Education! But that is the merest shard of what SLOC did. It handed out multiple first-class tickets, knowing they'd be redeemed for cash. It underwrote years of training expenses for three Sudanese athletes in exchange for votes. It wrote hundreds of thousands of dollars in checks which it called, for accounting purposes, contributions to underprivileged athletes, although all of them—without exception—were made out to the individual IOC members.

It was the Third World that found this kind of politics most congenial, with bribed delegates coming from Togo, India, Mauritius, Nigeria, Mongolia, and Algeria. On the urging of Johnson, the California sporting-goods mogul and

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The United States is now viewed abroad as a country congenial to corruption of the cheapest variety.

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IOC member James Easton gave a job to Sibusiso Sibandze, son of Swaziland's ousted IOC delegate David Sibandze. "He was an outstanding employee," says Easton, as if that were the issue. Easton says "the bank" (presumably Utah's First Security, whose CEO and director are with SLOC), the state, and the city all offered jobs to relatives of IOC delegates. Welch lent Julia Wallwork of Western Samoa $30,000 out of his own daughters' college trust fund. (Money that Welch got back but Wallwork didn't repay . . . hmm!)

The princeling of Salt Lake largesse was the Congolese Jean-Claude Ganga, who as president of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa controlled a bloc of IOC votes. A longtime anti-apartheid activist who led the 1976 boycott of the Montreal Olympics, Ganga got $115,000 in travel, a knee replacement for his mother-in-law, and cosmetic surgery for his wife. Much of the medical care was provided free, thanks to arrangements made by Welch. Not to mention Croesian shopping trips to—incredibly—Wal-Mart (a fact Salt Lake defenders have trumpeted, presumably on the assumption that if it's "good value," it's not corruption). Estimates of how much *cash* Ganga got continue to rise. But weeks ago, when only a few payments had been discovered, he indignantly told a French radio station, "Some members have asked to be paid $700,000 to vote for Salt Lake—so don't ask me about $60,000!"

The ethical review board said there is no evidence SLOC broke the law. They're probably right. The International Olympic Committee is a private body that can set its own rules. But there *is* evidence that the United States is now viewed abroad as a country congenial to corruption of the cheapest Third World variety. One can't blame those reject cities like Manchester, Berlin, Istanbul, and Quebec City—which have mounted good-faith bids to host future Games—for filing lawsuits against the IOC.

We can flatter ourselves that the Salt Lake scandal is only the excess of a handful of dizzy-with-success plutocrats in an atypical state. But we said that about Arkansas, too. It's time to admit that's baloney. This is the American Way. It's what always happens when big money and big government cross paths. The "gray area between ethical and unethical" is where our society has its being. What happened in Salt Lake was a money-laundering scheme carried out in the name of "health care," "education," and "the environment," with a special solicitude for "people of color." Does that sound like an aberration? No—it sounds like the way Bill Clinton would describe our political system if he were *bragging* about it.

With the issuing of the ethics report, Gov. Leavitt hailed a "new Olympic standard of openness." Sure! Now that the Games are bought and paid for, let's let bygones be bygones! There is no indication as yet that any of the rejected countries has considered boycotting the Salt Lake City Olympics. But any American concerned about corruption could make the case that *we* ought to. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Apocalypse Gore

The vice president's vision of our civilization "in crisis."

ADAM WOLFSON

BEFORE the 1992 vice-presidential debate, Al Gore's camp reportedly said that it would allow Dan Quayle to bring a copy of the Gore book *Earth in the Balance* to the debate, but only if Gore were allowed to show up with a potato. Not so, says Quayle in his memoirs. He would gladly have traded the potato for the book; but the Gore team simply would not hear of it—potato or no potato.

Apparently, the book was thought by Gore's own staff to be damning. What could have scared them? Certainly, *Earth in the Balance* is one of the most unusual books ever written by an American politician—though not for the reasons ordinarily given. Yes, the book is full of wild speculation about the environment, and, yes, Gore offers some silly ideas about how to address the problem. But it is the book's political and moral content that is remarkable, even frightening. Al Gore is truly our first postmodern national leader.

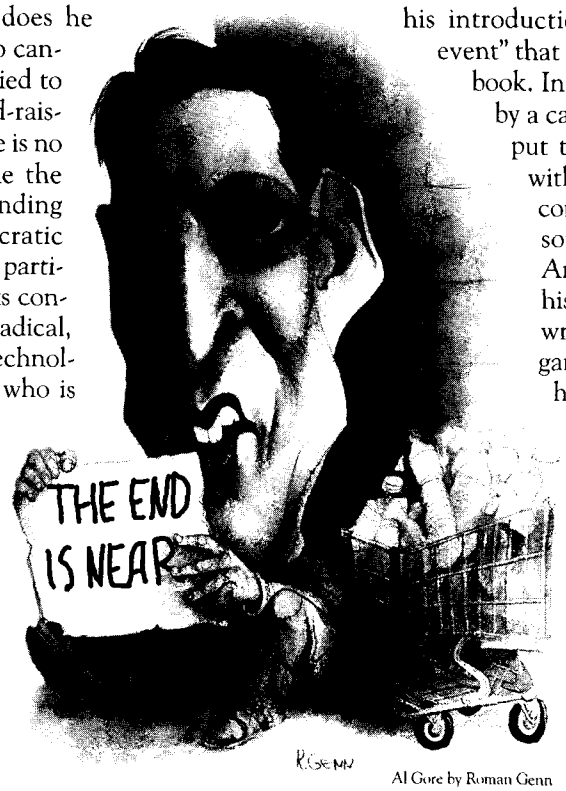
Gore will run for president in 2000. Indeed, the hustle and bustle of his campaign has already begun. But who exactly *is* Gore, and what does he stand for? Is he the Boy Scout who cannot tell a lie? Or the fellow who tried to exonerate himself from illegal fund-raising with the chilling phrase, "There is no controlling legal authority"? Is he the moderate New Democrat, a founding member of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council? Or the wildly partisan, left-wing demagogue who pelts conservatives with insults? Is he the radical, tree-hugging green who despises technology? Or the avatar of technology who is credited with coining the phrase "information superhighway"? Is he the "practical idealist" who would continue Clinton's legacy of triangulation? Or the revolutionary who would take America in truly new directions?

To find the real Gore, one can hardly do better than take a close look at *Earth in the Balance*. This may at first seem an odd claim. The 400-page book bristles with references to chaos theory, relativity theory, and "self-organized criticality" theory. The science it contains is complemented by long discussions of Aristotle, Descartes, and Bacon. Interspersed are maps, charts, and graphs, along with almost 20 pages of notes and bibliographic material at the end.

But if the book has a scholarly veneer, it is also quite personal. As Lance Morrow wrote in *Time*, the book "speaks with a certain passionate authenticity." By nearly all accounts, Gore wrote the book himself, without assistance from a ghostwriter—something almost unheard of today. *Earth in the Balance* is unmistakably *his* book, reflecting how and what he thinks. He even takes trouble to record in a note, "The discussion of Greek philosophy is based on my own reading of Plato and Aristotle."

In March 1992, Gore confided to *Roll Call*, "I put my whole heart and soul into this [book]." This is undoubtedly so. In his introduction, he describes "a single horrifying event" that changed his life and led him to write the book. In 1989, he saw his 6-year-old son get hit by a car, badly injuring him. Later Gore would put the incident to political use, sharing it with the entire nation at the Democratic convention in 1992. He even turned his son into a political symbol, likening America to his son's limp body. It was in his son's hospital room that Gore began to write his book, and one should not disregard the effect he claims the ordeal had on him:

> For me something changed in a fundamental way. I don't think my son's brush with death was solely responsible, although that was the catalyst. But I had also just lost a presidential campaign; moreover, I had just turned forty years old. I was, in a sense, vulnerable to the change that sought me out in the middle of my life and gave me a new sense of urgency about those things I value the most.



Al Gore by Roman Genn

Mr. Wolfson is executive editor of *The Public Interest*.

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Earth in the Balance thus describes Gore's spiritual journey at mid-life and his personal philosophy. These aspects were largely missed by reviewers, however, who tended to treat *Earth in the Balance* as primarily a policy statement on the environment. But to overlook the book's larger aims is, as Gore might say, to miss the forest for the trees.

Gore sets out to inquire into "the very nature of our civilization." From this lofty vantage, he claims to see what most have not—that the environmental "crisis" is rooted in certain other "crises": in an unresponsive political system, in a dishonest economic system, and in a philosophical blunder that has brought about individual and cultural dysfunction.

According to Gore, "there is . . . a fundamental problem with the political system itself"—it "is simply not working";

For Gore, the "crisis" is rooted in a philosophical blunder that has brought about cultural dysfunction.

it is "itself in a deep crisis." Some of the problems he mentions are familiar enough. For example, he singles out the undue influence of special-interest groups on our politics. He also complains about "large campaign contributors" who have more access to decision-makers than do average citizens. (Evidently, he got over this worry once he became vice president and made some 46 calls from the White House to Democratic fat cats.) But he also claims that the political problems are spiritual in origin, attributing them to a lack of authenticity among politicians.

Not only our political system but our economic system is in "deep crisis." Gore does admit that democracies with free markets have better environmental track records than the Soviet bloc ever had. (One need only mention Chernobyl to settle the point.) But Gore is never satisfied with the obvious. He always wants to probe deeper, to get to the bottom of things. In his view, one of the fundamental facts about capitalism is its blindness. It "sees" what can be bought and sold—food, clothing, manufactured goods, and the like. But it is blind to other, equally valuable goods: "fresh water, clean air, the beauty of the mountains, the rich diversity of life in the forest." This blindness, in Gore's opinion, "is the single most powerful force" behind our inadequate and shortsighted environmental decisions. It is not a technical oversight but a moral failing. It is, says Gore, "a form of dishonesty." Gore goes further still in his attack on capitalism. Its blindness, he says, is "philosophically" speaking similar to "the moral blindness implicit in racism and anti-Semitism."

For Gore, though, the political and economic deficiencies of our civilization are but "superstructure," as the Marxists used to say. Yet unlike the Marxists of old, Gore does not look to some economic substructure to explain our problems; instead, he attacks the philosophical ideas that undergird modern Western civilization. In his view, today's crisis can be traced back 300-odd years to "the Cartesian model of the disembodied intellect," and even further back to "Plato's conception of a disembodied spiritual intellect hovering above the material world." He accuses these thinkers, along with Francis Bacon, of cutting people off from their roots in the earth and fostering a predatory attitude towards nature. More specifically, he criticizes Descartes for bringing about a separation of mind from body, thereby encouraging the cultivation of intellect while stifling the expression of feeling. Bacon, he charges, took Cartesian dualism a step further, separating science from religion and fact from morality. Under the spell of these two great thinkers, the world would cease to be man's bower. It would become a mere object to be mastered and subdued for man's own rational purposes.

PSYCHIC PAIN

Such dualism produces, according to Gore, "intense psychic pain," which is no small or incidental thing but lies "at the very root of the modern mind." Basically, our psychic pain is brought on by modernity's overemphasis on rationality at feeling's expense. Gore offers two elaborate metaphors to help the reader understand the causes and consequences of this psychic pain—one relying on addiction theory, the other on family-dysfunction theory. The exact nuances of these metaphors need not detain us here. What is crucial in both instances is this: They supposedly illustrate our alienation from the world. We modern men and women are either like drug addicts or the children of dysfunctional families, both of whom suffer enormous psychic pain. Like addicts or emotionally damaged children, we will do anything to distract ourselves from that pain. But not just any distraction will do. The distraction of our "dysfunctional civilization"—that's the title of Chapter 12—is, writes Gore, the "consumption of the earth." We run about buying and selling, ever on the lookout for new amusements and "shiny new products." Why even shopping has become a form of amusement, Gore laments. All the while our "dysfunctional civilization" wreaks havoc on the natural environment. And for what possible end? "The froth and frenzy of industrial civilization mask our deep loneliness for that communion with the world that can lift our spirits and fill our senses with the richness and immediacy of life itself."

Gore's juxtaposition of the emptiness of industrial civilization with nature's richness brings into clearer view one of the book's leading ideas: authenticity. According to Gore, we live in "an inauthentic world of our own making":

> Life can be easy, we assure ourselves. We need not suffer the heat or the cold; we need not sow or reap or hunt and gather. We can heal the sick, fly through the air, light up the darkness, and be entertained in our living rooms by orchestras and clowns whenever we like.

Well, what's wrong with such a world, authentic or not? The answer is to be found in Gore's metaphors of addiction and dysfunction. This inauthentic, "false world" was created by people only to distract themselves from their psychic pain. The world of leisure, air conditioning, industrial agriculture, modern medicine, and home entertainment is, in other words, not good in itself. It is but a fleeting sideshow. Only by somehow awakening from such inauthenticity will the cycle of psychic pain and environmental plunder be broken.

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Education, Gore says, is the antidote. But what about those inauthentic people "who will not acknowledge these destructive patterns"? These are the dishonest and inauthentic "enablers," including "many political, business, and intellectual leaders" who deny "in aggressive and dismissive tones" their addiction. But they also are not beyond (re)education, and here Gore once again resorts to his analogy of the addict. Recovery is possible, he argues, if "rather than distracting their inner awareness through behavior, addicts . . . learn to face their pain—feel it, think it, absorb it, own it."

Though it is not always clear what to make of Gore's many analogies and metaphors, there is one that Gore particularly stresses. He intends the idea of "dysfunctional civilization" in the literal sense. "The idea . . . is by no means merely a theoretical construct," he asserts. In our own century, he points out, there are many examples of dysfunctional civilizations, including "Nazi Germany under Hitler, Fascist Italy under Mussolini, Soviet Communism under Stalin and his heirs, and the Chinese Communism of Mao Zedong and Deng Xaoping." Amazingly, Gore compares our civilization to these evil, totalitarian regimes, for he detects the same psychological principle at work in all of them. Just as Hitler or Stalin or Mussolini invaded other countries in search of inner validation, so we plunder the earth of its resources to mask our psychic pain. Gore asserts that Ethiopia has been victimized by both forms of dysfunctionality in this century. In the 1930s, the Italian Fascists invaded the country, and after World War II our civilization in its way—searching for wood—did so as well. "The millions who have starved to death are, in a real sense, victims of our dysfunctional civilization's expansionist tendencies." (To drive home the point, Gore includes on the facing page a picture of a starving child in Bangladesh, apparently also one of our civilization's victims.)

Yet, in Gore's mind, our civilization resembles Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany in a still deeper, more essential sense. The atrocities of Hitler and Stalin, he argues, followed from the same first principles of the "disembodied intellect" (recall Gore's discussion of Descartes) and the separation of fact from morality (recall his discussion of Bacon) that lead us to destroy the environment. In both instances, Gore sees the "ultrarational mind" at work, creating "an elaborate edifice of clockwork efficiency capable of nightmarish cruelty on an industrial scale." He notes that Hannah Arendt coined the phrase "the banality of evil" to describe the Nazi bureaucracy's strange mix of ordinary acts and evil consequences. So too Gore finds in our civilization's technological assault on the earth "the banal face of evil." Both totalitarianism and "consumptionism" (his label for our civilization) are "examples of alienation and technology run amok."

Such bald assertions notwithstanding, perhaps Gore does not really mean to compare our civilization to Nazi Germany's or the Soviet Union's. Or perhaps he is doing so only to make a powerful, but merely rhetorical, point. One would be wrong to suppose any such thing. Gore intends the comparison in all seriousness:

> It is not merely in the service of analogy that I have referred so often to the struggles against Nazi and communist totalitarianism, because I believe that the emerging effort to save the environment is a continuation of these struggles, a crucial new phase of the long battle for true freedom and human dignity.

And he intends the comparison in all of its brutal specifics. Thus in several instances he refers to the "ecological holocaust" now taking place, and in another instance he invokes Martin Niemoller's famous words ("In Germany the Nazis came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. . . .") in reference to the environmental crisis. He even invokes *Kristallnacht*—when the Nazis in one murderous night in 1938 destroyed synagogues and Jewish businesses, and killed nearly 100 Jews—to hammer home his analogy. "Today the evidence of an ecological *Kristallnacht* is as clear as the sound of glass shattering in Berlin."

GREEN REVOLUTIONARY

Given such an understanding of the environmental problem—"this ungodly crisis," he calls it—Gore, as one would expect, is very impatient with half-measures ("appeasement," he charges). Many of his policy proposals have been widely reported and derided—for example, "completely eliminating the internal combustion engine over, say, a twenty-five-year period." But his policy recommendations are broader still. "Those [institutions] still mired in the past must be swept forward and changed," he asserts. Our corrupt civilization must adopt as its "central organizing principle" the rescue of the environment, which means, Gore tells us, in typically grandiose fashion, "embarking on an all-out effort to use every policy and program, every law and institution, every treaty and alliance, every tactic and strategy, every plan and course of action—to use, in short, every means to halt the destruction of the environment and to preserve and nurture our ecological system." One now understands perhaps what he really means by "reinventing government."

But the changes Gore favors go beyond the policy or political realm, because, according to him, we are in the midst not only of an "environmental crisis" but also a political "crisis," an information "crisis," an inner spiritual "crisis," and "a deep philosophical crisis." "We need to act now," he urges. We must "drastically change our civilization and our way of thinking"; we must even make "a change in our essential character"—our essential character! The necessary transformation will be "profound" and "wrenching," he warns. Not only must we "reinvent" government but human nature too.

Given this gargantuan multi-headed crisis, and the revolutionary changes that will be necessary to save us, it should hardly come as a surprise that Gore praises ecological activists as

"I can't tell you how good it feels to have you in our corner, Litigation Man."

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"people of conscience" and "resistance fighters" who are "like the men and women who became part of resistance movements in World War II." Unless our civilization undergoes the "wrenching" changes he says are necessary, he foresees the outbreak "of a kind of global civil war between those who refuse to consider the consequences of civilization's relentless advance and those who refuse to be silent partners in the destruction."

Absent "wrenching" changes to civilization, Gore foresees the outbreak "of a kind of global civil war."

None of this invective against modernity is especially original to Gore (though we should take him at his word that he wrote *Earth in the Balance* himself.) Such postmodern critiques of our civilization took the academy by storm decades ago, inspired by the philosopher Heidegger. That's old news. What's new is that a possible—even a probable—future president is aping these same arguments. When a tenured radical rails against the modern world, the principal harm is that his students will be cheated out of an education. But when our vice president, and would-be president, puts forth these same arguments, one's heart ought to skip a beat.

Consider Gore's grossly one-sided caricature of our civilization as dysfunctional and inauthentic. Following the standard postmodern line, he blames Descartes and Bacon for our troubles. Some skeptics might ask whether it is fair of Gore to blame our psychic pain, not to mention the greenhouse effect, on two men who lived hundreds of years ago. But let's assume for the sake of argument that Bacon and Descartes are as important to our situation today as he says. What follows from it? According to Gore, nothing but evil. He informs us that Bacon "enthusiastically advocate[d] vivisection for the pure joy of learning without reference to any moral purpose, such as saving human lives as justification for the act." This is meant as no mere commentary on Bacon's character. Insofar as Bacon is the father of our modern, technological civilization, it is meant as an indictment of us.

But if Bacon and Descartes were the fathers of anything it was of modern medicine. Both were interested in using knowledge for "the relief of man's estate" or "the use and benefit of man," as Bacon once put it. Their goals were the humanitarian ones of extending life, making it more comfortable, and lessening the ravages of disease and poverty. To say that Bacon was an immoral advocate of vivisection and to leave it at that is a gross calumny of Bacon, not to mention our civilization. Or allow me to make the point in another way. In his acknowledgments, Gore thanks the doctors who set his son's broken bones, treated his internal injuries, and performed microsurgery on his damaged nerves. It was Bacon and Descartes who, hundreds of years ago, took the first steps that would make such miracles of modern medicine possible. Gore's dour picture of modern technological civilization is then ridiculously distorted. Yes, there is a dark side to technology. But to indict our entire civilization as dysfunctional, as Gore does, is to forget the great boons to human health and comfort modern Western philosophy and science have also brought forth.

And then there is Gore's disturbing idea of "authenticity." As Lionel Trilling once noted, this "is a word of ominous import." Who is Gore to say, we might inquire, what are authentic purposes and what are not, who is an authentic person and who is not, what is an authentic world and what is not? Where does he get the knowledge to make such fundamental distinctions? Gore associates the inauthentic with "the noisy chatter of our discourse," with the pursuit of comfort through technology, and with a consumerist culture. An inauthentic person is a "false self," or someone who does not live in his own life, as Gore strangely puts it. Gore may well be a good democrat; but it takes little imagination to see where his analysis could lead (as it indeed has in the "dysfunctional" totalitarian states of our century). To the reeducation camps go the inauthentic ones, where they will be forced to become authentic.

The same imprecise use of language and sloppy thinking afflict Gore's praise of environmental activists as "resistance fighters." The resistance fighters of World War II killed people in their just war against the Nazis. Gore would no doubt condemn (if he has not done so already) the eco-terrorists who recently set fire to a ski resort in Colorado in their desire to protect "wild and unroaded areas" or the "Unabomber," who killed and maimed to halt technology's spread. But then Gore should not use such politically charged labels as "resistance fighters." And he should not predict a "global civil war" between "people of conscience" and those who oppose them. Such rhetoric will only lead to the injury and death of innocents.

Finally, one must not let pass without comment Gore's analogy of the totalitarian regimes of this century to our own civilization, or his despicable comparison of today's environmental problems to *Kristallnacht* or the Holocaust. At one point, Gore writes that "a metaphor can be a valuable aid to understanding." Perhaps. But what do we learn by comparing the fight against Nazism to the fight against consumerism? Obviously nothing. Gore's metaphors only lead to obscurantism, blinding us to the most weighty moral and political distinctions. During the 1992 campaign, the *Wall Street Journal* got hold of an internal Democratic National Committee memo that listed possible objections to *Earth in the Balance*. One of them was that Gore "has no sense of proportion: He equates the failure to recycle aluminum cans with the Holocaust—an equation that parodies the former and dishonors the latter." Indeed.

Gore's postmodern arguments ultimately point towards the overthrow of our liberal civilization, with its belief in individual rights, the dignity of man, the standard of reason, and material progress through science. Instead, Gore would have us devote ourselves to certain postmodern anti-ideals—the rights of the earth and "authenticity." How odd that the Democratic party's heir apparent should be so estranged from liberalism's tenets. In the 2000 presidential debates, the Republican nominee should be sure to ask the vice president whether he stands by *Earth in the Balance*. It's something the American people may want to know. **NR**

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When Character Counted

The importance of Ronald Reagan.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

On February 4 and 5, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Center for Public Affairs sponsored a two-day symposium at the Ronald Reagan Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. The theme of the event was "Eight Years that Changed the World: The Reagan Legacy in the New Century." Mark Burson, executive director of the Reagan Foundation, opened the meeting. Speakers and panelists were: Brian Mulroney, Martin Anderson, Sander Vanocur, Edwin Meese, Murray Weidenbaum, Dinesh D'Souza, Stephen Entin, James Miller, Clark Judge, Larry Arnn, Richard McKenzie, William Niskanen, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Maureen Reagan, Ken Adelman, Richard Allen, Howard Baker—and Mrs. Reagan.

The keynote speaker was William F. Buckley Jr. An excerpt from Mark Burson's introduction: "With the establishment of NATIONAL REVIEW, *Buckley gave to conservatism what it previously lacked—intellectual firepower, sophisticated and literate reasoning, and, yes, even a sense of humor. These are the weapons with which the long, twilight struggle with liberalism has been waged, and along the way attracted more than a few converts to the root message. And we know that one of the proud Americans who heard the message was a popular movie actor, television personality, and former Democrat who also did a few things in politics."*

MRS. Reagan, Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Burson, ladies and gentlemen:

I recall that Henry Mencken described an introduction to him on a celebratory occasion as having evoked "a full moon, the setting sun, and the aurora borealis." In this perspective, if all of that which Mark Burson has said of me really belongs to me, how am I expected even to intimate the achievements of Ronald Reagan? Well, I can do that, really, in one sentence.

He succeeded in getting Nancy Reagan to marry him.

The country is familiar with the legend of Nancy, familiar with her accomplishments as companion, aide, monitor, wife, and lover. There was never anyone who more devotedly served a husband. She has renewed for us all the meaning of the pledge to stand by in sickness and in health.

This being a convocation of friends and admirers, in celebration of his birthday, I propose as keynoter to dwell a while on a longtime friendship. It began in the spring of 1960. Ronald and Nancy Reagan, whom I hadn't met, were seated at one end of the restaurant, I and my sister-in-law at the other end. We were out of sight of one another. Both parties were headed, after dinner, across the street to an auditorium in a public high school. There I would be introduced, as the evening's speaker addressing an assembly of doctors and their wives, by Ronald Reagan, a well-known actor and currently the host of a television series sponsored by General Electric; moreover, a public figure who had taken an interest in conservatives and conservative writings.

We bumped into each other going out the door. Ronald Reagan introduced himself and Nancy, and said he had just finished reading my book, *Up From Liberalism*. He quoted a crack from it, done at the expense of Mrs. Roosevelt, which he relished. I requited his courtesy by relishing him and Nancy for life.

He distinguished himself that night—and dismayed Mrs. Reagan—by what he proceeded to do after discovering that the microphone hadn't been turned on. He had tried, raising his voice, to tell a few stories. But the audience was progressively impatient. Waiting in vain for the superintendent to unlock the door to the tight little office at the other end of the hall in which the control box lay, he sized up the problem and, having surveyed all possible avenues of approach, climbed out of the window at stage level and, one story above the busy traffic below, cat-walked, Cary Grant-style, twenty or thirty yards to the remote office window of the control room. This he penetrated by breaking the glass window with a thrust of his elbow, climbing in, turning on the light, flipping on the microphone, unlocking the office door, and emerging with that competent, relaxed smile of his, which we came to know after Grenada, Libya, Reykjavik, and Moscow; proceeding with the introduction of the speaker. And all that was thirty years before bringing peace to our time!

Sean Delonas

In later years I thought his movements that night a nifty allegory of his approach to foreign policy, the calm appraisal of a situation, the willingness to take risks, and then the decisive moment: leading to lights and sound—and music, the music of the spheres.

We stayed friends.

Twenty years later he was running for President of the United States. Early that winter the Soviet military had charged into Afghanistan,

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beginning a long, costly, brutal exercise. A week or two after he was nominated in Detroit, I wrote him. I told him I thought he would be elected. And told him then that, on the assumption that on reaching the White House he might wish to tender me an office, I wished him to know that I aspired to no government job of any kind.

He wrote back that he was disappointed. "I had in mind," he said, "to appoint you ambassador to Afghanistan." Over the next eight years, in all my communications with him, I would report fleetingly on my secret mission in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan where, in our fiction, I lived and worked. In his letters to me he would always address me as Mr. Ambassador. The show must go on, where Ronald Reagan was involved.

■

The conclusive factor in the matter of American security was the character of Ronald Reagan.

■

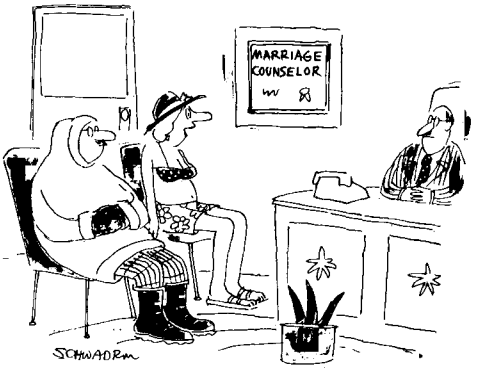
Soon after his election I was asked by the Philadelphia Society to speak on the theme, "Is President Reagan doing all that can be done?" It was a coincidence that my wife Pat and I had spent the weekend before the speech as guests of the President and Mrs. Reagan in Barbados. I recalled with delight an exchange I had with my host on the presidential helicopter. We were flying to our villa the first evening, before the two days on Easter weekend reserved for bacchanalian sunning and swimming on the beach in front of Claudette Colbert's house. I leaned over and told him I had heard the rumor that the Secret Service was going to deny him permission to swim on that beach on the grounds that it was insufficiently secure. I asked him whether that were so, that he wouldn't be allowed in the water.

Helicopters, even Marine One helicopters, are pretty noisy, but I was able to make out what he said. It was, "Well, Bill, Nancy here tells me I'm the most powerful man in the Free World. If she's right, then I will swim tomorrow with you."

Which indeed he did.

I recall also that during one of those swims I said to him, "Mr. President, would you like to earn the NATIONAL REVIEW Medal of Freedom?" He confessed to being curious as to how he would qualify to do this. I explained, "I will proceed to almost drown, and you will rescue me." We went through the motions, and that evening I conferred that medal on him, *in pectore*.

I remember telling the Philadelphia Society that the most powerful man in the Free World is not powerful enough to do everything that needs to be done. Retrospectively, I have speculated on what I continue to believe was the conclusive factor in the matter of American security against any threat of Soviet aggression. It was the character of the occupant of the White House; the character of Ronald Reagan. The reason this is so, I have argued, is that the Soviet Union, for all that from time to time it miscalculated tactically, never miscalculated in respect of matters apocalyptic in dimension. And the policymakers of the Soviet Union knew that the ambiguists with whom they so dearly loved to deal were not in power during those critical years. So that if ever the Soviet leaders were tempted to such suicidal foolishness as to launch a strike against us, suicidal is exactly what it would prove to have been. The primary obstacle to the ultimate act of Soviet imperialism was the resolute U.S. determination to value what we have, over against what they, under Soviet dominion, did not have; value it sufficiently to defend it with all our resources.



"We used to at least be able to discuss the weather without arguing."

TOTAL COMMITMENT

Ronald Reagan, in my judgment, animated his foreign policy by his occasional diplomatic indiscretions: because of course it *was* a diplomatic indiscretion to label the Soviet Union an "evil empire." But then, quite correctly, he would switch gears when wearing diplomatic top hat and tails. He did not on those occasions talk the language of John Wayne—or of Thomas Aquinas. But how reassuring it was for us, you remember, every now and then ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall!"), to vibrate to the music of the very heartstrings of the leader of the Free World who, to qualify convincingly as such, had after all to *feel* a total commitment to the free world. When in formal circumstances the President ventured out to exercise conviviality with the leaders of the Soviet Union, the scene was by its nature wonderful, piquant: What would he say that was agreeable, congenial, to the head of the evil empire? The summit conferences brought to mind the Russian who, on discovering that his pet parrot was missing, rushed out to the KGB office to report that his parrot's political opinions were entirely unrelated to his own.

The ensuing chapter in the life of Russia presents its own problems. They are internal problems, with a surly outer face. You can hear the words framed on the mouth of the few remaining statues of Lenin. His lips are saying, *So much for your capitalism!* Russia poses no strategic threat to the Free World, to which Russia, de jure, belongs. But the contemporary experience of Russia is a devastating rebuke to facile, universalist ideas about what it is that needs to be done to nurture advances towards prosperity.

One key, of course, an indispensable key, is human freedom. When West Germany was liberated from fascist tyranny, and Japan from imperialist militarism, well-wishers of freedom cheered the results as life began its dramatic turn toward self-rule and a market economy. But in Russia the old brew didn't mix, did it? It isn't hard to compile a list of the missing elements. We know now about the profound corruption, and know how corruption conjoined with industrial satrapies can

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defy the benevolent ministrations of a free market. The causes of the wealth of nations heralded by Adam Smith cannot make their way in the absence of a reasoned mobility of a nation's resources and a receptive theater for the entrepreneurial energies of its people.

There will be many books written about what happened in Russia in the decade beginning with liberation. The inquests will be various and prolonged, and they will all be sad; but they will make vivid lessons we need to absorb, as we project the economic future of other nations to be sure, but also of our own. The overarching lesson is that the elements of a good society oriented to the improvement of life aren't all disembodied, inanimate; weight scales at a free-market counter. There is the live component.

And it is not just formal self-rule. Democracy is a mantra, but it isn't an amulet. We can chant the benefits of democratic arrangements and cheer democratic practices; but these practices do not always lead to enlightened policies. One third of the Duma in Moscow are Communists. The freedom the Russians had, for the first time, to vote, very nearly returned a Communist president in the election of two years ago. The popularity of the democratically elected president of Russia today is given as 1 percent. (He should try poking an intern.) A substantial number of Russians would exchange life as it is today for life as it was yesterday. Thirty million Russians have not been paid for weeks of work, in some cases for months of work. What is a Russian gravedigger supposed to do, if he is not paid? Dig his own grave?

At the other end of the world we have the dismaying spectacle of Japan, recently referred to as the Land of the Setting Sun. "It is quite amazing," Larry Kudlow recently opined: "They haven't managed to do *anything* right." Eight consecutive years of mismanagement by the second wealthiest country in the world. A democratic society whose people are demoralized, seemingly lost.

A STAMP ON THE NATIONAL MOOD

The lesson for our students of political economy is that we cannot fully depend on autopilots to do what is necessary. The Framers of our own republic said it again and again, that in the absence of virtue, no government could vouchsafe to a people a life of liberty and order. There are technical questions to solve and others that aren't at all technical. What Japan needs to do its governors are not doing, in part because of ignorance, in part because pride and stubbornness and fear prompt them to preserve decadent enterprises. The Russians despair of reform, and the social festers continue, awaiting what almost inevitably and sadly we think of as another revolution, one that might make dominant a class of leaders willing to adjourn their own fleeting interests today, for prospective gains tomorrow that will endure.

The problem is *theirs*; our concern is limited to geostrategic questions. At our blessedly immediate geographical remove from Tokyo and Moscow, we have the finite benefit of a little insularity. But the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific are exactly that, finite comforts, only as reassuring as the distance between where mid-range missiles land and where strategic-missiles land, a distance that time is battering away at, progressively diminishing the security we feel in our little snuggery here. To utter the words *From sea to shining sea* used to evoke an almost infinite distance. It is now a mere stretch of space, traveled by missiles in about 18 minutes.

The Reagan years accustomed us to a mood about life and about government. There were always the interruptions, the potholes of life. But he had strategic visions. He told us that most of our civic problems were problems brought on or exacerbated by government, not problems that could be solved by government. That of course is enduringly true. Only government can cause inflation, preserve monopoly, and punish enterprise. On the other hand, it is only a government leader who can affect a national mood or summon up a historical period. One refers not to the period of Shakespeare but to the period of Elizabeth. Reagan's period was brief, but it put a stamp on the national mood. He did this in part because he was scornful of the claims of omnipotent government, in part because by nature and by the words he spoke, he felt, and expressed, the buoyancy of the American Republic.

We have now the paradoxical situation, a leader whom 75 percent of the American people don't wish to disturb, and whom 75 percent of the American people do not trust. It is comforting to tell ourselves that what this means is that we live in an age in which the long arm of government is so discredited, it can't really do us much damage. If Mr. Clinton were indeed powerless, then he would be a threat only to maidens passing by. But leaving aside the power he wields as commander in chief, he has the power, and has exercised it, to cultivate a cynicism whose final effects we cannot appraise, nor even imagine. If what he has done is trivial, then much of what we think of as the infrastructure of civil society is also trivial—our commitments to truth, to the processes of justice, to the sanctity of oaths. It is possible that in future years, if there will be a return to wholesomeness of habits of thought and deed, the cloud that will hang over the last year of the 20th century won't be the memory of a year spent on impeachment, but the memory of a year in which no action was taken after impeachment.

It is fine that the Ronald Reagan Library, Museum, and Center for Public Affairs, which serves as our host, will collect his papers and ambient literature, permitting generations of students and scholars to explore and linger over those happy years which augured the end of the Soviet threat, the revitalization of our economy, and a great draft of pride in our country. To the library I'll convey in years ahead my own collection of letters from Ronald Reagan. The very last one written from the White House the day the Soviet Union announced that it would withdraw from Afghanistan was addressed,

"Dear Mr. Ambassador:

"Congratulations! The Soviets are moving out of Afghanistan. I knew you could do it if I only left you there long enough, and you did it without leaving Kabul for a minute."

He closed by saying, "Nancy sends her love to you and Pat." That was eleven years ago, and we cherish it today, and through her, convey our own love and gratitude to the President, on his 88th birthday. **NR**

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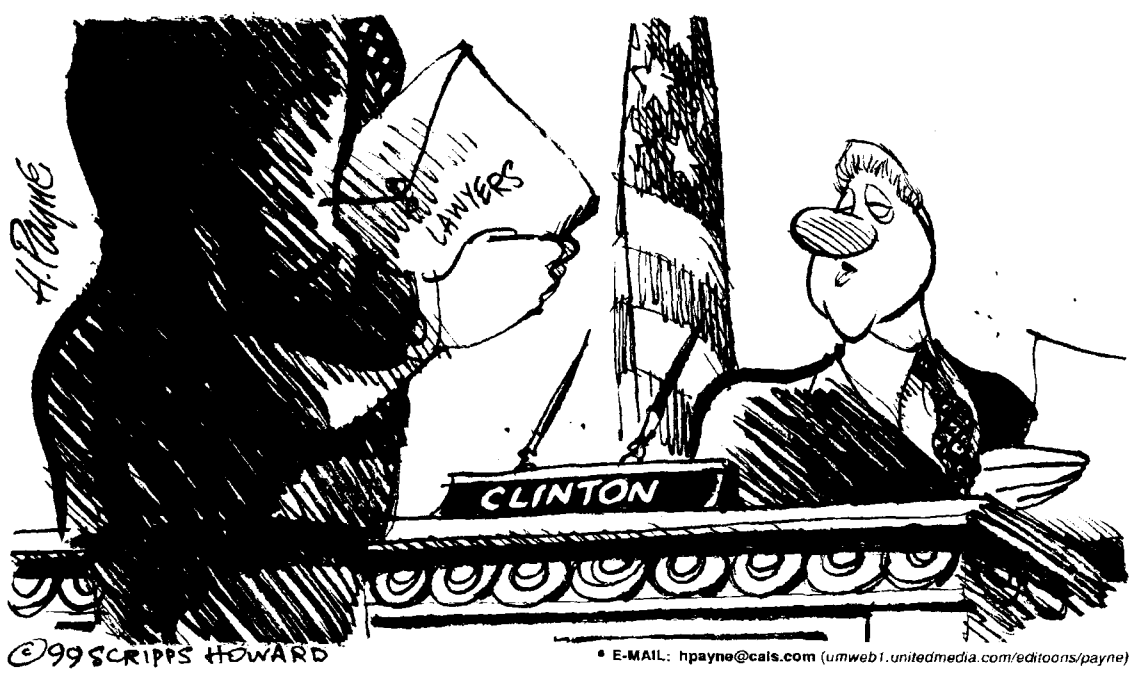
HELP!!!!



"TELL THE STALKER I'M SORRY."

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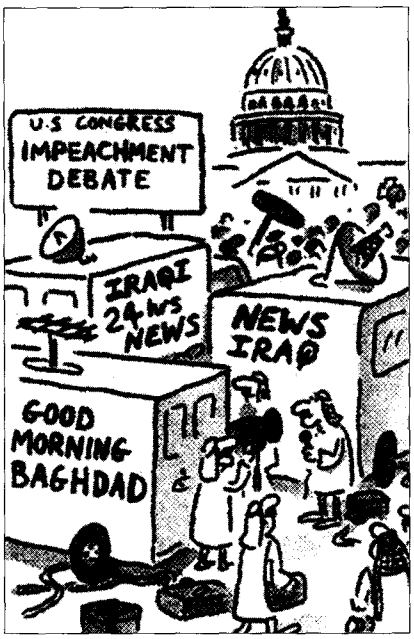
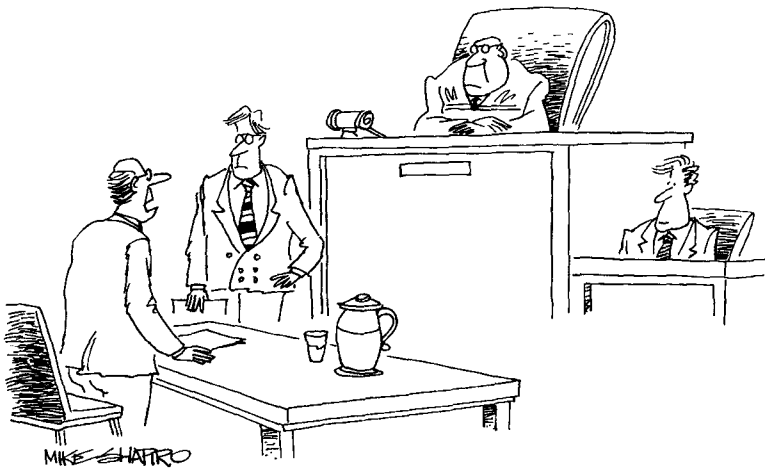


Matt—Rothco

"I'd vote for him as tribe leader if he weren't so soft on defense."



"At this point, your honor, I'd like to shift the blame away from my client and onto someone else."

"Be careful how you behave around the bourgeoisie, son—they have something called 'morality'."

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 14, 1999

Dear Rusty,

Everything okay? I keep writing but you haven't replied. Is this about the impeachment mess? Do you think I've hurt myself by being so supportive of Bill? Maybe the enclosed campaign speech will make my feelings clear:

Intro: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the next president of the United States, Al Gore!" [huge applause; hold for standing ovation; wave; clear throat; look around the room; point and smile at local party treasurer; mouth "nice to see you" at everyone; raise hands to get everyone seated; wait for everyone to get seated.]

Thank you. Thank you so much. You know, after spending the last few months in Washington, I can tell you that it's GREAT TO BE IN [insert name of town]!

For too long, we've allowed the radical right wing of the Republican party to make this campaign into a debate about a person's private life. I say, it's time to move on! [hold for applause]

It's about issues! It's about [insert focus group major topic]! Four years, the radical Republicans have been blocking our attempts to address [focus group major topic] by [insert focus group major topic preferred solution]. We have tried to pass major legislation which would [focus group major topic preferred solution] to [focus group major topic]. But they said "no." No to [focus group major topic preferred solution] and no to America's children.

But it's not just about [focus group major topic]. It's also about [focus group secondary priority topic]! For too long, we've put off doing the important work. For too long, we've let the radical right wing of the Republican party ignore the wishes of the majority of Americans, who have told us loud and clear that [focus group secondary priority topic] is a national crisis! Make no mistake, my friends! If we don't address [focus group secondary priority topic] now, then the next century won't be a century of American greatness, but one of American decline.

The Gore Plan to solve the [focus group secondary priority topic] crisis is to [focus group secondary topic preferred solution]. We call it [focus group preferred action words] for the New Millennium. It means [focus group secondary priority action words] for the [audience median demographic]. It means [focus group secondary priority additional preferred action words] for the [audience secondary median demographic]. And it means that children remain our greatest national resource.

But to that, the Republicans say "no." Well, my friends, what do we say? [hold for "yes!"] Yes to [focus group major topic preferred solution]! Yes to [focus group secondary topic preferred solution]! Yes to [audience median demographic]! Yes to [audience secondary demographic]! And yes to the children! Because without them, there is no THIRD millennium!

That's why this election is so important. It's [focus group major, secondary, and tertiary topics] versus [focus group major, secondary, and tertiary turnoff topics]. The Republicans think you care about [focus group major, secondary, and tertiary turnoff topics]. But you and I know that's not true!

It's time for a change! It's time to end the politics of division! It's time for [focus group preferred stirring closer]! [hold for ovation]

Does that clear it up, Rusty? I haven't given up my integrity. It's just that this time, I think I'm going to win. I mean, how can I turn my back on Bill now, when he's taught me so much?

Your pal, Al

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Rise of a Monster

RICHARD LOWRY

Hitler: 1889–1936: Hubris, by Ian Kershaw (Norton, 845 pp., $35)

HITLER has become the dark center of philosophical, historical, and psychological debates that swirl and double back on themselves until there are debates about the debates and Hitler himself becomes the obscured. In his survey *Explaining Hitler*, Ron Rosenbaum illustrates this phenomenon by reproducing a chart of dizzying complexity designed to prove, through the price and size of gauze at the time, that Hitler's dying mother was overprescribed iodoform by a Jewish doctor (thus engendering a genocidal grudge in her son). The other extreme is represented by filmmaker Claude Lanzmann—deliciously skewered by Rosenbaum—who rejects any attempt to explain Hitler and the Holocaust as a desecration (and not just of the historical fact, but of his film *Shoah*).

In the first installment of his two-volume biography, Ian Kershaw bypasses the grand philosophical musings and explanatory muddle with a straightforward narrative of Hitler's rise. To the confounding question, How could it happen?, Kershaw has a basic, implicit answer: politics. Hitler wasn't a demonic apparition or a product of historical inevitability, but a gifted demagogue and hater who through force of circumstance, the ineptitude of his opponents, and his own sharp political instincts bullied his way to power. Kershaw's *Hitler* is the "outside story," an account terrifying exactly because it seems so frankly *possible*.

As a young man, Hitler was already a frustrated egomaniac, seized with grandiose dreams he had neither the talent nor the discipline to realize. (His work habits never changed—in the 1930s, his agriculture minister once spent two years trying to win an audience with him to discuss policy.) As a penniless artist in Vienna, he consumed the gutter anti-Semitic press and fevered nationalist politics of that city, his views hardened in the wake of World War I, and by the mid 1920s he was the dangerous thug with four or five fixed, murderous ideas he would take all the way to his bunker in 1945.

A/P/ Wide World Photos

Adolf Hitler as an infant

With Hitler, the outside story is almost all that exists. "He doesn't smoke," complained one Nazi official, "he doesn't drink, he eats almost nothing but green stuff, he doesn't touch any women! How are we supposed to understand him to get him across to other people?" Even in private, people got the sense he was acting, and his relations with women were always bizarre (older women tended to make him gifts of dog whips, young girls to attempt suicide over him). In the army, where he was the happiest, Hitler had just one close friend: a dog. "I liked him so much," he recalled. "He only obeyed me."

Kershaw's Hitler has one talent: rabble-rousing. He was "discovered" in 1919 when he and other soldiers were attending a right-wing indoctrination session in the wake of the brutal crushing of the Bavarian socialist revolt (in a trick of right-wing politics throughout this period, the socialists or Jews or whoever were blamed for the violence attendant upon their own repression). After one of the lectures, Hitler was haranguing fellow students about the Jews when an instructor noticed his animated speaking style. Soon, he was giving talks to fellow soldiers, then attending and quickly dominating meetings of a tiny proto-Nazi party.

The Hitler style of politics never changed: It was all agitation, all propaganda, all mobilization toward the goal of power. Vivid posters announcing the early Nazi meetings were supposed to provoke the Left into attending (Hitler himself designed the striking party banner with the swastika in a white circle on a red background). The presence of opponents made for an electric atmosphere and the possibility of violence, which in turn would win the party attention and hence more crowds.

Hitler himself was almost entirely a creature of crowds. Early on, the celebrated party speaker refused an invitation to address a wedding: "I must have a crowd when I speak. In a small intimate circle I never know what to say." But for all his dependence on the mass, Hitler had only contempt for it. "The broad masses are blind and stupid and don't know what they are doing." "For the crowd, 'understanding' is only a shaky platform." "What is stable is emotion: hatred."

The nature of Hitler's politics—as well as his impulsive temperament—dictated his recklessly aggressive tactics. Because his supporters couldn't stay perpetually agitated—and his storm troopers couldn't stay perpetually restrained—

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Hitler was always in a position of having to use it or lose it. This prompted the ridiculous putsch in 1923. The brief loss of momentum while he haggled over the terms of the chancellorship in 1932–33 threatened the Nazi movement, and even once in power he felt compelled to push one risky foreign-policy adventure after another to keep his forward motion. Hitler's frequent suicide threats perfectly complemented his politics—all or nothing.

Despite the perpetual motion, Hitler himself never much changed. There he is, at the beer-hall putsch, excitedly brandishing a pistol like a gangster, holding his political opponents at gunpoint. And there he is as Reich chancellor—leader of a great European nation—still brandishing his pistol during the Night of the Long Knives, spittle on his lips as he promises to have his opponents shot (and quickly following through on the threat). Murder is a theme throughout, from the exterminationist anti-Jewish rhetoric at the very beginning, to the putsch, to his public support for Nazi murderers even as he was poised on the brink of power, to his murder of members of the Reichstag in 1934, which the rest of that body took with equanimity, indeed cheered.

It should have been clear all along what Germany was getting in Hitler, and in any civilized nation his career should have been disqualifying. Without the economic crisis, it would have been in Germany. Instead, the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic was washed away from the right and the left, and power brokers among the army and conservative politicians, who had played footsie with Hitler even back before the 1923 putsch, looked to him to bring popular backing to the authoritarian regime they hoped, but couldn't quite manage, to establish themselves.

Hitler, who understood power in a way they didn't, quickly overmatched the wise men who had hoped to box him in. Within a matter of months, crucial centers of opposition had been swept away, and most Nazi thuggery, in the name of "order," enjoyed popular backing. The enormity of the Holocaust—its techniques and its ambition and its otherworldly cruelty—will always provoke a horrified sense of mystery and the aching need for explanation. On the other hand, it's not necessarily so mystifying that a band of ruthless criminals, once in possession of state power, should set about on a program of murder. The men who negotiated Hitler into power refused to reckon on this. Their part in *Hitler* makes it not just a tale of evil ascendant, but of the awful price of politics practiced poorly. **NR**

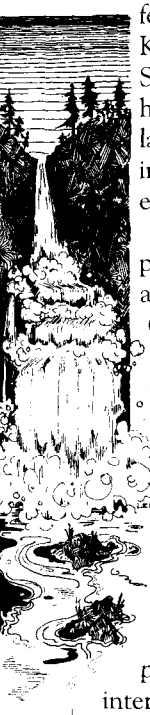
Writing Unafraid

JAY NORDLINGER

A Passion for Truth: The Selected Writings of Eric Breindel, edited by John Podhoretz (HarperCollins, 230 pp., $25)

WHEN Eric Breindel died a year ago, he was accorded something like a state funeral. Politicians, tycoons, and scholars all mourned a singular talent, whose influence had been great. You would have thought a major figure had passed from our midst. Indeed, one had.

Breindel was a journalist—only a journalist—but he scribbled with a purpose. From his perch at the *New York Post*, he attracted controversy, scorn, and intense admiration. His style was both erudite and blunt. In his causes, he was unrelenting. He was an Everest of indignation, still inveighing while others had given out. Breindel proved just what an opinion writer can accomplish—provided he has the will, intelligence, and guts.



Now there is a collection, edited and introduced by John Podhoretz (who succeeded Breindel as the *Post*'s chief editorial voice). Here we find some 70 of Breindel's columns, reflecting his three main concerns, or obsessions, as Podhoretz admiringly calls them: anti-Communism, New York City, and the Jews. Like all true teachers, Breindel never hesitated to repeat himself. His work is enough to give obsession a good name. We see that he dedicated his career to an awesome task: memory-keeping and myth-destroying.

Breindel was a dream of an anti-Communist. He was gloriously unafraid of the cry "Red-baiter!" He called a Communist a Communist when nothing was more impolitic, and he shamed those who refused to do likewise. He was a sort of hunter, a Simon Wiesenthal sniffing the terrain for Stalin's friends—and Hitler's, and Arafat's—demanding that they be held accountable for what they were.

Even when the Soviet Union expired, Breindel would not desist. If necessary, he would use his column to conduct his own little Nuremberg trials. Was David Duke exposed as an ex-Nazi in Louisiana? Fine: But what about the ex- (or maybe not so ex-) Communists holding office in New York? When most Americans couldn't tell Gus Hall from Monty Hall, Breindel kept a sharp eye on the CP–USA, whose capacity for mischief he always considered underrated.

He would not let Kim Philby die in peace. Oh no. He remembered the Albanians the traitor had caused to die on the beach (and if he were writing today, he would not turn away from the slaughter of other Albanians in Kosovo). He could have his fun with Reds and their fellow-travelers, like the absurd Joel Kovel, Alger Hiss Professor of Social Studies at Bard College (really). But he would typically add, "Before we laugh too hard," reminding us of the inhumanity of the Communist enterprise.

With the release of the Venona papers (Soviet cables), Breindel had another batch of columns to write (plus a book). He wanted Americans to face "the dread notion that some things are true even though Richard Nixon or Joe McCarthy said they were." He would not take a holiday from Hiss or the Rosenbergs or I. F. Stone or J. Robert Oppenheimer (who even today is scandalously untouchable). Neither would he allow lies about Paul Robeson to pass unchallenged, even in the interests of black–Jewish relations.

It's not that Breindel was intolerant, snitch-minded, and unforgiving. It's that he abhorred dishonesty, and revered

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truth, and despaired over those who were "animated by myths." He knew what the real scoundrel time was.

He also knew about Dinkins time—the near-ruination of New York, his hometown. For years, his writing about the city was, as Podhoretz observes, suffused with "Spenglerian doom." And why not? As we read his columns, we recall, with a shudder, the bad old days: Joel Steinberg, Larry Hogue, Colin Ferguson, the teacher from NAMBLA, Billie Boggs, the Central Park jogger, the Korean boycott, Yankel Rosenbaum, Leonard Jeffries . . . How could the city have stood it?

Breindel was not purely a ranter; rather, he excelled at the clinical dissection. He could explain painstakingly how a mugger might be awarded $4.3

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Eric Breindel proved just what an opinion writer can accomplish—provided he has the will, intelligence, and guts.

■

million. He demolished the (widespread) contention that Hogue, "The Wild Man of 96th Street," was a Vietnam veteran, disabled in the war. He eviscerated the anti-poverty saint Morris Dees, who, after Ferguson gunned down 25 people aboard a train, noted "a rising sense of frustration among blacks that the promises of the civil-rights movement are not coming to pass." No cant or idiocy or demagogue could survive Breindel's pen.

And he was, thrillingly, brave about race—perhaps the hardest subject in the country to be brave about. He confronted the Sharptons and the Farrakhans, which is easy, but also the Jacksons and the Rangels, which is less so. His columns on the jogger are virtually unreadable, unblinking as they are about that ghastly event and its ghastly aftermath. The same with his commentary on the boycott and Crown Heights.

Perhaps above all, he was a noble Jew—a child of Holocaust survivors for whom "Never again" was not merely a tired slogan but an urgent, daily command. He was the kind of Jew who annoys others (including Jews) by pointing out the world's unceasing enmity against the Jews. He returned to the Holocaust again and again—obsessively, you might say—because the Holocaust perpetually bore down on him, and us.

For him, the Barbie trial (for instance) was not a pathetic spectacle at the end of a wicked man's life; it was a time of reckoning, for everyone. He had an exceedingly low threshold for moral equivalence, and he erupted when Barbie's lawyer sneered at Elie Wiesel, *What about the French in Algeria? What about American troops at My Lai? What about* (and here's the inevitable kicker) *"Jewish atrocities against Arabs?"* This, Breindel insisted, was precisely what the West needed desperately to combat—namely, moral unreason.

He simply could not forget and would not leave alone. He wouldn't let John J. McCloy rest in peace, he wouldn't let a Nazi doctor be elected president of the World Medical Association in peace, he wouldn't let Mitterrand gloss over his collaborationist past in peace, he wouldn't let the screwy Africanist Ali Mazrui produce his PBS documentaries in peace, and he wouldn't let Karajan conduct in peace (even badly).

Nor would he let sophists abuse the word "peace." With each misleading step of the Middle East "peace process," Breindel warned, Isaiah-like, against "cries of peace, peace, when there is no peace." He was an inspired exponent of Zionism, understanding Israel to be a gathering-place from which Jews could fight for their survival. He snorted at the cliché "enemies of peace," judging it "a term of art reserved for Palestinian terrorists who murder Israelis." The terrorists were not enemies of peace, he thundered; they were enemies of Israel.

Eric Breindel was, in all matters, a nuisance—a magnificent nuisance. He did the necessary, usually thankless, work of memory-keeping and myth-destroying when others were unwilling, or incapable, or scared. He threw himself into the key questions of the century and shot back brave and true answers. He was an honest writer. And he was not afraid. On virtually every page of the new volume, there is inscribed a watchword: Be not afraid.

No wonder they mourned so. **NR**

Capital Crimes

HOLMAN W. JENKINS JR.

Turbo-Capitalism: Winners and Losers in the Global Economy, by Edward Luttwak (HarperCollins, 290 pp., $26)

The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered, by George Soros (Public Affairs, 245 pp., $26)

MANY worthwhile books have been written lamenting the passing of one golden age or another, and their sorrow is no less genuine for the recognition that the new age is bound to be the golden age of someone else.

Edward Luttwak has written such a book about the passing of what he calls the era of "controlled capitalism" in favor of something new and altogether more unsettling, the age of "turbo-capitalism." In fact, he has written an unrelievedly grim book, lightened only by frequent exercises of wit at the expense of investment bankers, software imperialists, and options-loaded corporate chieftains. His villains are deregulation, free trade, and the anti-inflation religion. Blind, in his view, were politicians who allowed these forces to sweep away the wholesome "rigidities" that once let the untalented and the dysfunctional find comfortable places in the highly regulated bureaucracies of big business.

He ranges far and wide to show that now is a bad time not to have money—and a bad time if you do. File clerks and factory hands have been expelled from the middle class, displaced by technology or cheap foreign labor. Even for the affluent, life has become an unhappy scramble to earn, consume, and climb higher before somebody or something knocks them off. Whatever society has gained in greater economic efficiency, wealth, and lower overall unemployment, these must be weighed against

Mr. Jenkins is a member of the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal*.

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pervasive anxiety and the social consequences thereof. We've unleashed a pace of change that "brutally exceeds the adaptive limits of individuals, families, and communities."

It should be noted here that the author himself has less cause to complain than many. A respected military strategist and historian (he helped plan the Gulf War air campaign), Luttwak has undergone a successful defense conversion. Nowadays, Americans are feeling fairly chipper, judging by the consumer-confidence indices, yet his latest opus lands as Asia wallows in depression, Japan stagnates, and Russia and Brazil have undergone spectacular monetary meltdowns. There is still much to be insecure about, and Luttwak is nothing if not "acrobatic" (his favorite adjective for the über-adapters of the turbo-capitalist era). He makes everything and anything fit his brief.

In one of his more rollicking passages, he explains why voters don't rise up against the stresses and excesses that immiserate rich and poor alike. The "Calvinist winners" among us are too busy slaving toward the next paycheck, while the "Calvinist losers" (which includes everyone not in the top 5 percent) are too busy blaming themselves. As for a third category, the "non-Calvinist losers" (i.e., mostly blacks), they are packed into jails so they can't corrupt us with their dissent from the Calvinist equation of possessions and merit.

Every age is somebody's golden age and somebody's age of dross.

Luttwak could not fail to write an interesting book, being a man with an interesting mind. Yet somehow he ends up regretting turbo-capitalism without really opposing it. Not only can he not bring himself to endorse the French solution of protections for the tenured middle class at the expense of mass unemployment for the young. He actually pronounces untrammeled economic freedom—i.e., turbo-capitalism—the only solution for the impoverished, miserably governed masses of the developing world.

By the time we reach the end of this engaging, idiosyncratic gripe against reality, the author has grumpily conceded that there really is no choice but to let turbo-capitalism run its course. Every age is somebody's golden age and somebody's age of dross. Not even the Cold War, with its massive subsidized employment for military thinkers, could last forever.

In his own version of the same lament, billionaire speculator George Soros asks how the world got into its present fix. But he really seems to be asking, How did I get so rich?

One reason was his ability to spot an opportunity, which he dignifies with his theory of "fallibility" and "reflexivity." These $64 words decorate the pages of *The Crisis of Global Capitalism*, but what they really mean is that the quality of any investment is in the eye of the beholder. Because perceptions count for much, a self-fulfilling loss of confidence can disrupt even a perfectly good economy.

Soros seems to feel he must distill lessons from his story for the improvement of the world, and certainly something should be done to correct the vulnerability of the international financial system. But his idea, hardly even spelled out here, of having taxpayers insure global investment flows would only make things worse. How could the international bureaucrats he would put in charge of vetting a country's policies ever revoke their stamp of approval if that would set off just the kind of financial panic they're supposed to prevent? Moreover, a reader gets the feeling he leaves the most interesting element of his fabulous career unexamined because it doesn't lend itself to large-scale philosophizing.

What is that element? Anyone who cared to do so might have noticed the overvaluation of the British pound in 1992, the scene of Soros's most famous killing. But how many others had the instinct and stomach to round up billions of dollars and bet them on the fall of the pound? This is what makes Soros interesting, and it is always a mistake to write a book and not tell readers what they most care to know. For him the age has truly been golden, even with its inevitable dislocations. We'd like to know why. **NR**

Science Goes Nuts

PAUL R. GROSS

Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science, by Alan D. Sokal and Jean Bricmont (Picador, 300 pp., $23)

Mystery of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?, by Michael Ruse (Harvard, 320 pp., $27.50)

LIKE "culture wars," "science wars" is an expression first heard in the academy. They are both food-fights that began among the professoriate, fights that, for all their frequent inanity, have consequences, because ideas have consequences. We have here two recent entries into the science wars.

A few years ago, scientists took notice of a new kind of anti-science. It comes not from the usual precincts—medical quackery, New Age rapture, astrological pseudoscience, literalist creationism—but from the intelligentsia, and in many flavors. It is often associated with the remains of the New Left. It flourishes in humanities and social sciences, but also in "studies" programs where the curriculum is an ideological boot-camp.

Theoretical physicist Sokal is well known for an epic hoax he perpetrated on the practitioners of anti-science. In 1996, a trendy journal of cultural studies, *Social Text*, published an article by him, ostensibly on politics and quantum gravity, but in fact—unremarked by the editors—intended as a farrago of political cant and scientific nonsense. Sokal was testing a hypothesis: that the editorial "collective" at *Social Text*, although they pontificate on science, in reality a) know little about it, b) don't care about how ignorant they are, and c) adore politically correct sentiments. The hy-

Mr. Gross is university professor of life sciences, emeritus, of the University of Virginia, and co-author with Norman Levitt of *Higher Superstition* (Johns Hopkins).

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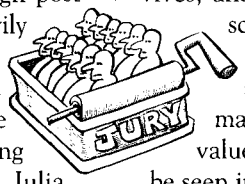
pothesis was sustained. Sokal revealed the hoax and all hell broke loose. The postmodernists quoted in the article were stars of French high culture, whose teachings had colonized American and British universities.

Sokal and physicist Jean Bricmont wanted to expand on a point made by the original hoax: that although postmodernist luminaries refer heavily to mathematics and physics, what they say is gibberish. Toward this end, they wrote *Impostures Intellectuelles*, with long passages from Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Bruno Latour, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Paul Virilio. In such vehicles as *Le Monde*, the book evoked abuse, including the charge that Sokal (a Francophile) and Bricmont (a Francophone) are Francophobes. Now rewritten in English, the book, *Fashionable Nonsense* is a gambol, widely reviewed. And the distribution of opinion is spectacularly bimodal.



A particularly sneering review appeared in the *London Review of Books*, by John Sturrock, a prince of cultural studies. He likens the Sokal and Bricmont effort to a "catchpenny campaign in defense of our mental virginity." His argument can be crystallized in a phrase familiar from less elevated quarters: *They just don't get it.*

But Sokal and Bricmont do get it. The exposition here is marred only by their anxiety to remain men of the Left, which leads to such banalities as "the harshest form of 'free market' capitalism seems to have become the implacable reality for the foreseeable future." Otherwise the authors' goal is limited and achieved. They are scientists who know philosophy, and are well read in cultural studies. Their sampling of science-palaver is comprehensive. *Fashionable Nonsense* is a rewarding and appalling read.

Professor Ruse, respected for contributions to philosophy and the history of science (especially evolution), comes on a Jimmy Carter mission of peace to the belligerents. He maintains that the hostilities all focus on an improperly phrased question. That question is: Which values drive scientific knowledge? Are they epistemic values (objectivity, reproducibility, predictive strength, empirical fruitfulness)? Or cultural values (religion, belief in progress, egalitarianism, militarism)? "Scientists" involved in the culture wars say *epistemic*; "sociologists" say *cultural*. Ruse detects a false dilemma.

It can be shown, he argues, that epistemic values inform all science that survives; and that fact grows clearer as a science matures. But he says it can also be shown that cultural values are present even in mature science, that the cultural values of important scientists can be seen in the work they choose to do.

Ruse fills out his argument with capsule biographies of ten contributors to evolutionary science, starting with Erasmus Darwin in the 18th century and ending with two currently working evolutionists, Geoffrey Parker and Jack Sepkoski. The "mystery of mysteries" referred to in the title is the origin of organic matter. In between we read about Charles Darwin, Theodosius Dobzhansky, Richard Dawkins, S. J. Gould, Richard Lewontin, and E. O. Wilson.

Although Ruse shows, in elegant vignettes, that the role of "epistemic values" in science has increased over the past two centuries, he has a harder time with "cultural values." To identify, as he does, belief in progress as a cultural value is already a stretch; to suggest as he does that such a belief actually affects the content of contemporary evolutionary biology is simply unjustified. To attribute to E. O. Wilson affection for religion and "militarism," as Ruse does because Wilson grew up in the South, is grasping at straws. That Lewontin is a Jew does *not* significantly illuminate his views of Nazism, the brilliance of his research in population genetics, or his implacable Marxism. Where Lewontin's politics become evident in his writing about science, it is irrelevant, or bad science.

In short, Ruse fails as a peacemaker. But *bella detesta matribus*—mothers hate war—and we must at the least listen respectfully to people who cry out in behalf of peace. That's why it's fine to be able to report that in *Mystery of Mysteries* we have a fine presentation of the Highlights of Evolutionary Thought, which casts light on *Fashionable Nonsense* and vice-versa. **NR**

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A King's Demise

D. KEITH MANO

Careless Love: The Unmaking of Elvis Presley, by Peter Guralnick (Little, Brown, 767 pp., $27.95)

FIVE years ago Peter Guralnick had considerable success with the lively *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, which broke off when Elvis began his military service in Germany in 1958. *Careless Love: The Unmaking of Elvis Presley*, his second and final volume, is, by comparison, rather like some flatulent and cheesy corpse bobbing up from the bottom of a fen.

Indeed, *Careless Love* is more exhumation than biography. Guralnick, after eleven years' research, feels compelled to catalogue every song from every studio session (most were failures), while updating us on the day-to-day status of Elvis's eight or nine live-in flunkies, not to mention his women and whatever his drug du jour might have been.

The terrible downward arc of Elvis's character from Germany on is desperate and sad (oh, that pathetic film career), despite an occasional good show in Vegas, and, of course, his fans' indiscriminating love. Guralnick seems insecure here, as he was not with the terrific upward arc of Volume One. He seems to wonder (as well he should) whether Elvis was worth it after all. "This is where the leap of faith comes in: At some point you simply have to believe that by immersing yourself in the subject you have earned your own perspective."

As the legend goes, pop-music visionaries had long been expecting a rock messiah to appear. There was all this cool black music (gospel, R&B, whatever) that young post-war white folk had been exposed to on the radio in the unsegregated privacy of their own homes. What this audience needed was a white singer with black sensibilities—enter Elvis, who had been brought up near Shake Rag, the ghetto of Tupelo, Mississippi. He was in the right place at the right time, and his rise could indeed be called meteoric—especially since meteors don't rise at all, they crash, albeit after extravagant pyrotechnic displays.

Elvis was a pedestrian guitarist. He didn't write his own songs (and later he would be jealous of the Beatles for that reason among others). He had no acting talent (all you could say about his ludicrous films was that they made a certain amount of money because their production values were so cheap). What then, exactly, was Elvis the king of?

Well, let's face it, he had an extraordinary look. His hair was aerodynamic (he used three different oils on it), and it said, in effect, "World War II is over, we're done with honoring soldiers and all that crew-cut regimentation." His eyes could reverse menopause in women. And his upper lip folded into a perfect sneer of contempt for anything adult or institutional. (But only when he was onstage—offstage Elvis became a modest, bashful young gentleman who admired Nixon.) Elvis was super-hyper by nature (much more so after being given his first amphetamines by his sergeant while on maneuvers), and it did seem that his stage performance consisted of setting the male orgasm to music. White Fifties parents were put off by Elvis, but at least he wasn't black.

Elvis also had a rather gayish attitude when it came to clothing design. He was for teenagers what Liberace was to older women (his own mother among them)—with the gayness so obvious in Liberace much repressed (we're talking about Tennessee in the 1950s, not the most appropriate era or venue for coming out). But your major indicators of homosexuality were always present in Elvis: weak father, strong mother, feminine self-absorption, a love for women that featured cuddling more than actual sex (and anyhow it was hard to fetch out an orgasm after X-number of uppers).

As Sun Records exec Marion Keisker said, "He [Elvis] was like a mirror . . . whatever you were looking for, you were going to find it in him. . . . He had all the intricacy of the very simple." Even if you wanted him to be a Greek hero, Elvis could oblige. Like Orpheus and the women of Thrace, savage teen girls at a 1955 concert in Jacksonville shredded his clothes and left him hanging semi-nude from the top of a stadium shower stall.

Elvis 'was like a mirror . . . whatever you were looking for, you were going to find it in him.'

But, as you learn from *Careless Love*, there would never have been an Elvis of this magnitude had there not also been a Col. Tom Parker, who managed the Presley empire from 1955 until some time long after Elvis's death. "The Colonel 'slept, ate and breathed Elvis.'" More than that, Parker knew about television and was one of the first to recognize the potential of pay-per-view. Easily the most intriguing aspect of either Guralnick volume is the long relationship between the young pop idol and this strange, boorish, indefatigable, and brilliant publicity man.

I was a child of the Presley era, but I don't think I heard any song of his through while paying anything like full attention. I presumed, first of all—given his strange name—that he was engaged in a parody. And if Elvis couldn't take himself seriously, why should I? Reading *Careless Love*, downbeat and serious as it is, only underscored my original assessment. As Elvis said of himself, "People will come from miles around to see a freak." **NR**

Mr. Mano is the author most recently of *The Fergus Dialogues* (International Scholars Press).

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Ellis's Island

JAMES PANERO

Glamorama, by Bret Easton Ellis
(Knopf, 482 pp., $25)

THE scene is the Cafeteria restaurant in Chelsea. The waitresses wear uniforms by Dolce & Gabbana. Welcome to Bret Easton Ellis country. The time is lunch, and my girlfriend is explaining how she dislikes the author's 1991 bestselling novel, *American Psycho*.

"He's the psycho," she declares over her mesclun green salad with cilantro and oyster mushrooms. "He has to be sick. And a narcissist. Anyone who writes about violence the way he does—I'd walk the other way if I saw him. And what's his obsession with designer labels? It's so self-serving."

"But babe, you couldn't put the book down."

"Well, yeah. Doesn't mean I like him."

Pull back to crowded restaurant. These are Ellis's people: young, successful, stylish, urban, confident. The cheek-kissers and the club-hoppers. These people know people—certainly more people than *you* do. I mean, look at your shoes. Your haircut. Your jeans. Your gut. Try getting in somewhere with *that* on.

Ellis revels in these people, even as his characters go from club-hopping to murder. His new novel, *Glamorama*, echoes *American Psycho*, with psychotic investment banker Pat Bateman replaced by fashion model Victor Ward. Victor wears Prada, rides a Vespa, and manages a New York dance club on his way to becoming the new "It Boy." He talks in soundbites, quotes song lyrics, even dates supermodels when not snorting heroin and acting the *enfant terrible*. Then, inexplicably, he joins a European terrorist syndicate and bombs a trans-Atlantic 747.

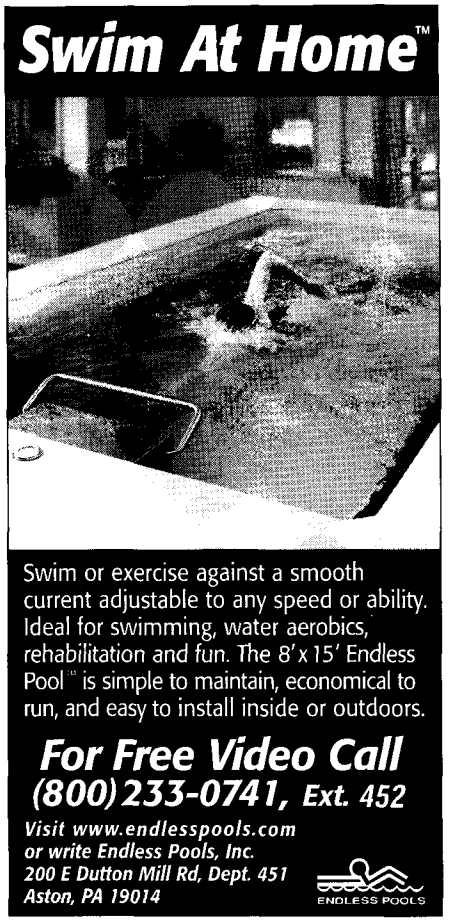
The plot is nihilistic; the characters, depraved. And page after page is filled with horrible, graphic violence. So why do I get the feeling Ellis is a closet conservative?

The question is, do we take *Glamorama* at face value or as satire? Ellis writes like a celebrity-crazed gossip columnist, coating Victor's trendy life in a patina of beautiful friends, carefree spending, sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. It's a world straight out of *Vogue* and MTV, and to emphasize the point Ellis incorporates the names of real people and products into his fiction. Listen to this name-drop from a *Glamorama* fashion show: "I'm able to spot Anna Wintour, Carrie Donovan, Holly Brubach, Catherine Deneuve, Faye Dunaway, Barry Diller, David Geffen, Ian Schrager, Peter Gallagher, Wim Wenders, Andre Leon Talley, Brad Pitt, Polly Mellon, Kal Ruttenstein, Katia Sassoon, Carrie Otis, RuPaul, Fran Lebowitz, Winona Ryder (who doesn't applaud as we walk by), . . ."

Ellis has these beautiful people doing some downright ugly things. He explained the brutality of *Glamorama* this way in a recent interview: "The connection between the fashion world and terrorism came from an abstract idea about the tyranny of beauty going on in the culture—how uneasy it makes everybody, how it makes everybody insecure about the way they look. Connect that with the insecurity of what terrorists do." Okay, but listen to this passage from his book, part of a three-page description of a downed 747: ". . . the smell of rot is everywhere—coming off dismembered feet and arms and legs and torsos propped upright, off piles of intestines and crushed skulls, and the heads that are intact have screams etched across their faces." Now did the tyranny of beauty ever make *you* feel that uneasy?

The plot is nihilistic; the characters, depraved. So why do I get the feeling Ellis is a closet conservative?

Cut back to table at Cafeteria. I show my girlfriend a folded copy of the *New York Times*'s review. The piece called *Glamorama* "sloppily contrived . . . [with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a] grisly taste for death and mutilation." She nods with approval and returns to picking at my plate of buffalo mozzarella. But I'm unsure.

I think back to Ellis's *Rules of Attraction*, his best novel and the only one in which violence doesn't play a major role. Its quiet and chaste account of wayward liberal-arts students has become a cult classic of the college generation—though it's in fact a subtle indictment of liberal college culture. The drunken hookups, the drugs, the social dysfunction, the loneliness of his characters scream, *Look what's happened to us*.

So maybe we should take Ellis at his word. Perhaps the graphic brutality of *Glamorama* really is there to puncture the cult of the celebrity. After all, the people committing the murders and blowing up the planes are uniformly rich, beautiful, and cool. The same people who wear liberal politics like a Patek Philippe watch. Notice this bit of dialogue as Victor, our narrator, debates how to promote his nightclub:

> "I think people are wondering why we don't have a whatchamacallit," Peyton says. Then after much finger snapping, "Oh yeah, a *cause*!" . . .
>
> "Victor, shouldn't we have a cause?" JD says. "What about global warming or the Amazon? Something. Anything."
>
> "Passé. Passé. Passé." I stop.
>
> "Wait—Beau! Is Suzanne DePasse coming?"
>
> "What about AIDS?"
>
> "Passé. Passé."
>
> "Breast cancer?"
>
> "Oh groovy, far out," I gasp before slapping him lightly on the face. "Get serious. . . ."

Glamorama is a devilishly heterodox novel. Yes, maybe even a conservative novel—though one so steeped in liberal pop culture that it's easy to miss the point. What does it mean to be conservative, anyway? Well, in part, it means . . . making fun of liberal chic, right?

Closing shot. We pay our Cafeteria bill and look around, checking to see if anyone we know has come in. I fold up the *Times* review and slip it in my pocket. We exit onto 17th and Seventh. I hail a crosstown cab. My girlfriend steps off the curb: "He's still a jerk." **NR**

■ THEATER ■

Undying Salesman

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

"ARTHUR MILLER": Eyes roll up in one's head at the mention of the name. The McCarthy witch-hunt era, bankruptcy of the American dream, rapacious capitalism, Reagan's Decade of Greed: Such are the themes of antique liberalism associated with Miller and his plays, including *Death of a Salesman*, now revived on Broadway to much adulation for the 50th anniversary of its premiere. Yawwwn!

Though as a high-school student I somehow escaped reading *Death*, I knew —or I thought I did—what it was about. Something to do with the bankruptcy of the American dream. Willy Loman, traveling salesman, is driven to suicide because success American-style is all about nakedly marketing oneself. "The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell," declares Willy's neighbor Charley in what might be taken as Miller's thesis statement. And this perverse commercial imperative makes true happiness for a man elusive if not impossible.

For a man—but what about a woman? At drinks before the play, my date explained how anxious her girlfriends, in their early 20s, feel about career success. "I mean," she said, "even today it's much harder for women to get ahead than it is for men. You know, with the glass ceiling and all." I looked around the little cylindrical Vodka Bar at the Royalton Hotel, where everyone wears black, and guessed that most of the other patrons would share her view. Now that women routinely labor outside their homes, we are all Willy Loman.

Or are we? A couple of hours later, halfway into *Death*, that was the question to contemplate.

A peculiar thing about Miller's plays is that, despite the agitprop points he meant to score through them, with minor tinkering or none at all they can speak with fresh power to contemporary audiences. Take *The Crucible* (1953), which roused the Salem witch-trial victims from historical slumber to prophesy against Senator McCarthy and HUAC. Nowadays, everything to do with anti-Communism has faded into irrelevance, a topic fascinating to fewer and fewer. So when the play was adapted onscreen in 1996, director Nicholas Hytner shrewdly avoided pressing any alleged parallels with McCarthyite excess. Instead he focused on the atmosphere of sexual paranoia generated by Winona Ryder and her band of lying, predatory little girls, accusers of Daniel Day- Lewis's fallible Puritan minister. Whatever the playwright himself thought to convey, old Salem in Hytner's hands became chillingly timeless.

As directed by Robert Falls, so too does *Death of a Salesman*. Miller's words are left unaltered, the place and period untouched: outer-borough New York circa 1949, though Willy's memories of two decades earlier are ingeniously woven into the action. When Willy begins to converse with invisible interlocutors, spooking his wife and sons, you know what ghosts he's seeing.

As Willy, Brian Dennehy makes your heart tremble. An actor familiar from supporting film roles, usually in some connection with law enforcement, he's got physical bulk of a kind that makes the pathos of Willy all the more appalling. Though he's a beefy guy, clothes hang on him evocatively. (He has explained that his pants always look baggy this way because "I'm f***ing Irish. I got no a** and a big belly.") In the final

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is the author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy* (Free Press).

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scene of confrontation with his son Biff, this is not a fellow you want to see cringing, his once-booming voice reduced to a cracked vessel.

Biff, 34 years old, is home after some years out West as a farmhand, having utterly failed to live up to his father's expectations. Willy has failed even more miserably. *Death* condenses 24 hours, in the course of which he loses his job and resolves to die by auto "accident" in hope of leaving his family the insurance money.

The play works agonizingly well. Not as any type of socialist harangue, but rather as a meditation on manhood. Try the following thought experiment: Imagine an updated *Death of a Salesperson* with, in the tragic lead, not Willy but Wendy Loman, disappointed to the verge of self-murder by her own inability, and that of her two daughters, to shatter the glass ceiling as bond traders at Goldman, Sachs.

Doesn't work, does it? No matter what success the Arthur Millers of the past few generations have had in shearing us of traditional assumptions about what choices in life are most conducive to human thriving, certain facts about our nature persist. Devoted though they may be to their work, women unlike men are not deeply humiliated by a tumbling career.

A man's descent to failure is horrendous to contemplate. Whatever line of work you are in, we are all salesmen, selling our products, our services, our selves. Says Willy's neighbor Charley, in a line that crystallizes the anxiety of uncountable men everywhere, not just in America: "And when they start not smiling back"—employers, partners, customers—"that's an earthquake."

Fifty years later, the fearfulness of Willy's predicament is undiminished because at heart we have the intuition that the soul of a man disposes him to provide for his family. If he can't do that, then in some fundamental way he has failed as a man, and he knows it. We may repress this instinctive knowledge, but ultimately it pops up like a rubber duck in a bathtub. Fifty years from *now*, whatever new varieties of social progress have been inflicted on us, we can be sure that—in its timelessness, however unintended by its author—*Death of Salesman* will be alive and well. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Small People, Great Pain

JOHN SIMON

KEN LOACH, born in 1936, has been called "Britain's last crusading leftist film director." "Leftist" the director of such movies as *Kes*, *Poor Cow*, and *Raining Stones* certainly is; "crusading," though usually in a restrained way, as well. Not in any sense "last," though; rather, in some ways, first and foremost. Decidedly ***My Name Is Joe***, though not flawless, proves him a major talent.

The title is unfortunate, doubly so because it invites being mistaken for *Meet Joe Black*, a recent elephantine flop. Like all of Loach's work, it is naturalistic on the surface, but with such sympathy for its characters, such insight into their small victories and not so small defeats, as to hold us spellbound from start to finish. A film able to imply so much more than it says, combining humor, heartache, mellowness, and drama (and only near the end some unfortunate melodrama), goes way beyond naturalism to the mysterious essence of our mundane yet extraordinary lives.

This is the story of Joe Kavanagh, an unemployed recovering alcoholic on the dole in Glasgow. The public-housing neighborhood he lives in (all cheerless cement), like his humble apartment, is more universal than Glaswegian—the realm of precarious survival. Joe has a friendly relationship with the parole officer in charge of him, who will even lend him some money. He has overcome ten years of booze with as many months of abstinence, and still counting. His one, alas unpaid, employment is coaching a hopeless neighborhood soccer team, sanguine in their bedraggled uniforms.

Joe is also responsible for chauffeuring his raggedy bunch to the playing field, though they are incapable even of giving him uncontradictory directions to their destination. And once the game starts, after considerable argument, some members of McGowan's drug-dealing gang

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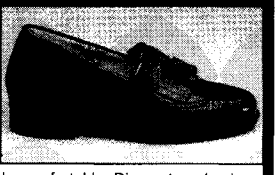

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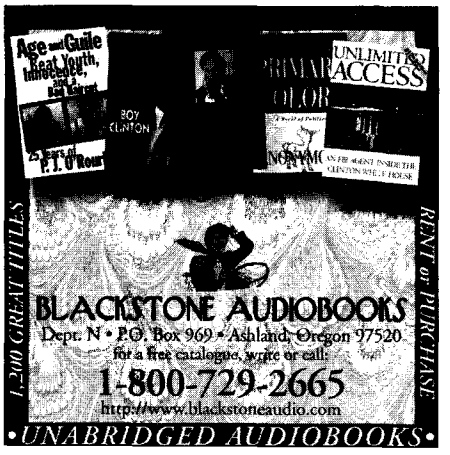

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show up and brutally work over one of the players. This is Joe's good friend Liam, who became addicted to the stuff he was peddling for them. Jailed, he incurred a further debt to the gang when Sabine, the mother of his child, took over for him, and appropriated the heroin she was hustling. Now the gang wants her to hustle her body for them, which Liam, out of jail, wishes to prevent.

Bleak, you say. Yes, but there is relief. Under amusing circumstances, Joe and his pals run into Sarah, a children's social worker whose apartment desperately needs wallpapering. Joe and a buddy hire out to do the job for her, even though the unemployed fellow is not allowed clandestine perquisites, and neither guy has ever put up so much as a poster. The scenes that follow are hilarious.

The job starts a friendship between Joe and Sarah that quickly develops into an affair. Since both he and she are insecure persons—he because of his alcoholic past when beating up his girlfriend queered him with the law, she because of her basic unsexiness—their movements toward each other are touchingly awkward, groping, overeager. They depend partly on chance, but more so on a basic decency that each discerns in the other. Another linking factor is that Sarah is the social worker assigned to Scott, the small child of Liam and Sabine, a family group for whom the kindly Joe involves himself in grave danger.

Where it all goes from there, I urge you to find out for yourself. But let me say that no one blends the harsh and the winsome better than Loach. Thus on a perilous drug-running mission that Joe undertakes for Liam in the Lake District, he waits for his contact while bemusedly discussing a second-rate bagpipe player entertaining tourists with a measly repertory of three tunes. That little exchange, with a bored young female vendor in a nearby kiosk, perfectly encapsulates life's absurdities. Or take the moment when Joe and Sarah, to whom he has confessed his battering of that ex-girlfriend, have a quarrel in turn. In a scene almost unbearably sad and beautiful, Sarah asks quietly, "Are you going to hit me, too, Joe?"

Let's not forget the incisive scenario by Paul Laverty, the subdued but telling cinematography of Barry Ackroyd, and the flavorous music of George Fenton. Hail, above all, to the luminous acting of Peter Mullan, Louise Goodall, and their impeccable supporting cast. The climactic action scenes are not entirely convincing, but the minor-key ending is perfect for a film that captures with understated poignancy both the sublime and the all-too-human.

■ The novelist Russell Banks and the filmmaker Paul Schrader are a match made in both Heaven and Hell. It is a perfect marriage—not of Heaven and Hell, which I leave to William Blake—but of Banks and Schrader, whose vision of bleakness and torment, of snow on the ground and frost in the soul, yields in ***Affliction*** a frozen panorama of human beings struggling to melt an iceberg by breathing on it.

Wade Whitehouse is the sole policeman in a small, generally crimeless but dying New Hampshire town; his chief duty is as crossing guard. Emblematically, he exercises this function by assuming the posture of crucifixion. Schrader is not only one of our rare cerebral directors, he is also that even rarer thing, an implicitly religious filmmaker, and a Puritan at that. So this quasi-Calvinist film, in which the Damocles' sword of predestination is passed down from fathers to sons, but indirectly affects also the lives of their women, exudes cheerlessness like invisibly spreading ink. The snow in *Affliction* is really black.

Wade has twice married and been divorced by Lillian, and can regain no sympathy from her or their young daughter, Jill, whom he smothers with desperate, clumsy affection. He would marry his devoted waitress girlfriend Margie merely for a better chance to get custody of Jill in a (probably hopeless) lawsuit. Meanwhile a visiting dignitary is killed in a hunting accident, and Wade tries to pin the murder on his good friend Jack, who was the hunter's guide. In the process, Wade loses his job—to Jack.

Margie and Wade move in with Glen, Wade's old man, whose negligence has caused his wife's death, and who is drinking more self-destructively than ever. We see in flashbacks how Glen mocked and savaged his children, Wade and Rolfe, now a history professor at Boston University, who wrongly thinks he has escaped the family curse. In the present, we watch how Glen and Wade continue to hack away at each other.

The film is decently directed by Schrader, who has made Rolfe the narrator, but Willem Dafoe, with his turbid-oily voice, is hard on our ear, and, looking like death insufficiently warmed over, on our eye as well. Sissy Spacek's Margie and Mary Beth Hurt's (Mrs. Schrader's) Lillian are perfect as, respectively, guardian and avenging angels. James Coburn is powerful as the ferocious father whom Wade haplessly replicates. The end, predictably, is tragic.

As Wade, Nick Nolte is irrational, violent, pathetic, intensely annoying, and still manages to elicit heartfelt pity: There is an ingenuous boyishness under his mulish obstinacy and pugnacity. Through much of the story Wade suffers from a nasty toothache, which he impatiently ends by performing some painful dentistry on himself with a pair of pliers. Unfortunately, the movie practices similar dentistry on us. Great tragedies, however inexorable, are cathartic for both protagonists and audiences. Here, however, we are sucked into the thrashings of a trapped animal, unrelieved by so much as blank verse. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Are the Republicans Frightened?

NEW YORK, JANUARY 26

REPUBLICAN legislators need a little cheer. What is being said is that they will be punished by the voters. Republican congressmen, for voting impeachment; Republican senators, for voting conviction. The line of defense being used by party officials is what you would expect: The Constitution provides an avenue for disqualifying a president from continued office, this president has offended the Constitution by lying and attempting to subvert justice, for that reason he was impeached, and for that reason Republican senators will vote to convict.

The whole thing has become tiresome, as certainly newspaper columnists will attest. But one wonders at this point not so much whether the apparent endlessness of it all is going to put us to sleep. The more interesting question is whether, in the days before the next election in 2000, it will be possible to acknowledge the motives of what Republican congressmen, and a few Democrats, actually did. They reacted to what President Clinton did and said.

How would you describe what he did and said? Well, why not quote from his most eloquent defender, former senator Dale Bumpers, who brought the whole country to a standstill in admiration of his plea not to convict his old friend. What Clinton did, Bumpers said, was "indefensible, outrageous, unforgivable, shameless." Senator Bumpers means by indefensible, we deduce, something which you can defend—after all, Clinton was only trying to cover up a sex thing. He means by unforgivable something you can forgive. After all, Clinton was only, well, only trying to cover up a sex thing. That leaves us with only outrageous and shameless. And what do you do when you behave outrageously and shamelessly? You call your lawyers.

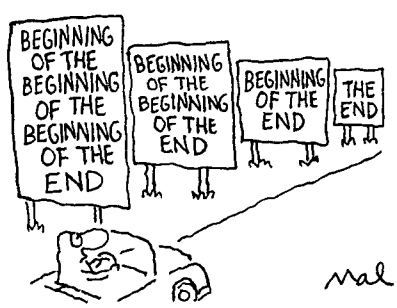
Time magazine's Nancy Gibbs neatly describes Clinton's hectic activity during that uproarious week at the end of which what seemed the entire country celebrated the survival of Mr. Clinton. Included in the charts of public opinion is the answer to the question, "All things considered, 25 years from now do you think Bill Clinton will be remembered more for: His accomplishments as president?"—18 percent. "Controversies over his personal life and financial dealing?"—72 percent.

And the GOP is supposed to worry about November, 22 months from now?

Here is the nature of the frustration being felt by those who do really believe that what Clinton did was indefensible and outrageous. It is that in our culture, it is simply not possible to give to a president authority as a detached political technician. It is a part of human nature to admire and even to love people who exercise great power. Ivan the Terrible was cheered by the crowds and beseeched not to give up his crown. Stalin and Hitler brought on thunderous public approval. One day after Mr. Clinton's State of the Union address, one week after 20 hours' enumeration of the deeds and words that caused Dale Bumpers to assert the need to forgive the unforgivable, Clinton was in Buffalo, speaking at a great rally. The minister who gave the invocation called him "the greatest president for our people of all time."

Twenty-five years from now will they be saying that he was the greatest president because of his political ability to surmount the consequences of his own conduct? By that standard, is O. J. Simpson a considerable historical figure, for surmounting the evidence against him? Well yes, he is, in a way. But he isn't a hero when he travels to Buffalo.

Will the Republicans who stand by the moral and constitutional imperatives be assaulted, in November 2000, for having kept open the question of Mr. Clinton's removal? And what will the opponents of the GOP incumbents say? That it just plain does not matter if a president's conduct is unforgivable and outrageous and indefensible? "There were those," Whittaker Chambers once wrote, "who at the great nightfall, took pains to preserve the tokens of hope and truth." Republicans apprehensive about the stand they have taken, one suspects, will have much less difficulty than is supposed, when they frame the question, to the voters, as the question should be framed. And if the marginal voters actually discharge a representative for acting as the majority in the House have acted, that representative can be forgiven if he answers that his separation from presumptive ties with his constituency is a development not only bearable, but welcome.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Counting Ex-Friends

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2

THE title of the new book by Norman Podhoretz stops you dead. You wish, fleetingly, that you had written a book with that zingy title: *Ex-Friends*. Well, maybe not—maybe we'd prefer just to forget ex-friends. Podhoretz is a serious man engaged in serious pursuits, and along the way in a full career as editor and author he concluded that a continuing friendship with these folks, on the old basis, wasn't any longer possible, or desirable. And he gives us the names of his ex-friends right on the cover of the book: Allen Ginsberg, Lionel and Diana Trilling, Lillian Hellman, Hannah Arendt, and Norman Mailer. That's on the order of naming Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as your ex-friends. The departure from that congeries of heavyweights requires the closing of a massive door.

Roughly speaking, they were the primary literary/political figures in New York, which was (and is) the cultural capital of the country. Ginsberg won't (I'd guess) live very long posthumously, but he howled a lot in bigtime salons. Lionel Trilling was the dominant literary critic in the United States and his wife was an accompanist of titanic dimensions. Hannah Arendt was thought by some to be the profoundest political critic in the world. Lillian Hellman was a dazzling figure who defied the House Committee on Un-American Activities, wrote smash Broadway plays, and nursed her sodden lover Dashiell Hammett through his long, unproductive years. Norman Mailer is still with us, probably the best-known man of letters in America, a workhorse writer chasing always after a resolutely fallen star. What happened in the lives of these men and women, as they crossed paths with the author, immediately engrosses the reader who has any interest at all in well-told tales, gossip, cultural and literary insights, and just plain fun.

Podhoretz went to high school in Brooklyn in the early Forties and there received a very cosmopolitan education:

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He actually ran into one teacher who was a Republican. He won a scholarship to Columbia and did brilliant work, focusing not on politics but literature. There he sat at the feet of Lionel Trilling, the author of *The Liberal Imagination*, followed by three years of graduate study at Cambridge. He then reported to the draft board and was sent to Germany with the occupation forces. A second lieutenant who was supposed to conduct the "indoctrination course" (the Army word) on the Cold War was hit by terminal stage fright. Podhoretz, the young corporal with all those college degrees, was tapped and delivered a series of lectures on the differences between them, the Communists, and us.

The day he got back to New York he reported for duty to the editor of *Commentary* magazine. In due course he became the editor of the most rewarding monthly journal of thought and criticism in America. Thirty-five years later he retired, having served as editor-in-chief and as the dominant figure in infusing into the culture of New York the catechism of neo-conservatism. It taught that 1) the Soviet Union was engaged in a winner-take-all conflict for the world; and 2) in almost every situation, the private sector is to be preferred to the public sector as an instrument of progress and prosperity. The Trillings were anti-Stalin and anti-Communist, but could not stand to risk association with the American Right. Hannah Arendt lost her perspective in writing about Israel, ignoring the singularity of the state and its meaning for Jewish culture, and could not shake herself free of the anti-Americanism so vibrant in American life. Lillian Hellman was an enduring apologist for Stalin; and Norman Mailer just got it wrong for so long, one finally gave up on him.

These figures come to life. The Family—the term given to the cultural leaders in New York, mostly Jewish—were great socializers. They partied all the time and everyone knew everyone and everyone was everyone's brother. When Norman Mailer tried (unsuccessfully) to kill his wife, he went to Norman Podhoretz to talk about it. Lillian Hellman was constantly inviting the Family to Martha's Vineyard, where she complained of her poverty and served kangaroo eggs. Podhoretz, in the Sixties, began to view two things through the haze. The first was the hostility to America that was feeding cultural attitudes and criticism; the second, the real consequences of geopolitical mistakes. A war in Vietnam; the jeopardy of Israel; the alienation of an elite; the demoralization of Woodstock.

We have a cultural history told through illuminating studies of six very big figures. Podhoretz does this with the deftness of Lytton Strachey writing about his eminent Victorians. He is steadfast in his narrative, so that the reader travels with him engrossed by the story, and by the wonderful flawed characters whose thinking dominated the cultural world through which Norman Podhoretz traveled toward a light many will think brilliantly illuminating.

Obligatory Sex

NEW YORK, JANUARY 29

TWENTY years ago I dined with Vladimir Nabokov, who told us that the smile on his face traced to his having executed his "OSS" in his writing session that afternoon. Of course I asked, What is an OSS? "The obligatory sex scene," he explained patiently.

I had taken, about that time, to writing novels, and in each of them there is an OSS. Inevitably, at author-promotional exposures someone would rise and ask why there was a sex scene in my book. A very good question (is how an author would probably begin his reply); and one asks, Why has there been a sex scene centered on Washington for an entire year?

The reason a contemporary novelist acknowledges the need to do a sex scene in a book in which sex is experienced is that sex conjoins, to a greater or lesser degree, two human elements. One is a biological appetite, the other, a romantic tie. Events in the White House unevenly affected the two participants, but even the principal—William Jefferson Clinton, as the House Managers call him—was involved in both senses. His engagements were more than perfunctory visits of a john to a whorehouse. There were a dozen visits without any sex at all in the Oval Office. And there were dozens and dozens of telephone calls, and more than a dozen gifts. Concubines, in the literature, are sometimes treated offhandedly; other times they are graced—gifts, little perquisites in the harem or palace. The other partner in the White House affair was a Scheherazade, who actually thought at one point that Bill would, in January 2001, leave not only the White House but also his wife.

How, then, to write a novel without at least touching on this phlogistic element that brought on the ten-year siege of Troy at the far edge of history and at this end threatens the survival of our super-emperor? How can one write a novel in which sex does *not* figure?

Every few minutes on Thursday, the day the Democratic leader and the Republican leader discussed arrangements for hearing the witnesses, they stumbled over each other reassuring the world that no "salacious" details would be ventilated. Now there is an ambitious undertaking, to forage through the Clinton–Lewinsky experience without letting in any salacious light. It is unrealistic to explain 27-minute telephone conversations without some intimation of what it is that those conversations touched on. A president doesn't call his secretary at one in the morning except to tell her to come in early because he is going to declare war; or to line her up to provide cover for a sex scandal. A sex scandal is inherently salacious. The House Managers are going to have a hell of a time bowdlerizing sex of any kind out of a tumescent sexual situation.

Great artists in the 19th century managed imperishable literature without sex, or without graphic sex. One does not feel shortchanged by Trollope or Dickens, but along about when Emile Zola came the basic alphabet of the artist extended. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* is all performed on four octaves. But few composers would now consent to use 48 keys, when 88 are available; and few novelists decline to touch down on that singular nerve that can catalyze death and despair, rapture and exaltation.

The effort to make it all so workaday as to be unworthy of notice is doomed to fail. It was for a while believed (a Danish legislator made much of this in the 1960s, defending the no-censorship laws) that if pornography were permitted, in a very little time satiety would throttle down the volume to just the trickle necessary to nurture pubescents into adulthood. Ho ho ho. The kiosks teem with the stuff. It is as undeniable and as copious as the tidal currents in the Bay of Fundy. The taxonomists long ago classified sex as a force of nature.

How can anyone contend that the mess created by the president is anything less than a mess? If it were less than that, why would the whole country be taken up with it? When Mr. Clinton undertook the cover-up, it was because he felt he needed to cover up something that had to be—covered up; the alternative being to court a Trojan War. To deny that what happened was convulsive is to deny reality.

One thinks of the late British scholar G. D. H. Cole. He went from his classroom at Oxford to catch the train to London, but missed it. He resigned himself to waiting for the next local. Unaccountably, the express train stopped. He opened a carriage door and took a seat. The train started up and minutes later the conductor appeared.

"Sir," he said. "This train doesn't stop here!"

"I know," said Mr. Cole. "And I'm not in it."

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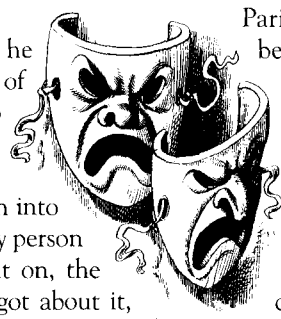
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

YOU really shouldn't encourage my sociopathic tendencies. I've been in a normal frame of mind, relatively speaking, for some time now, but it ended last week when I got a letter from a Gentle Reader thanking me for helping him realize that he's a misanthrope.

This in itself is not unusual. I've gotten numerous letters thanking me for making misanthropy acceptable, and I've saved them all as proof that, like some other people I could name, I work in mysterious ways. What made this latest letter different was the writer's confession of something that had been buried in his subconscious until I came along and dug it out.



In earliest boyhood, he wrote, he had had a fantasy of waking up one morning to find that some unspecified disaster had caused the rest of the human race to vanish into thin air, leaving him the only person in the world. As time went on, the fantasy receded and he forgot about it, but now, thanks to me, it was back.

And now, thanks to him, so is mine. I've had the identical fantasy off and on for years. The full-feature presentation took a while to produce but the story idea was there as far back as I can remember: specifically, the kindergarten "free-discussion" period when the teacher asked us to name our fondest wish and I said I wanted my own apartment.

As time went on, I noticed a widening gulf between the conventional definition of hardship and my own. In seventh grade when we read *The Man without a Country*, I didn't see why my classmates groaned and shuddered at the sentence meted out to the traitorous lieutenant. Spending the rest of his life aboard ship, sailing around and around the world, fed and clothed and allowed to amuse himself, but left completely alone by all those aboard, who were forbidden to speak to him—was punishment?

Later, as a history major, I came up against the same question time and again. Studying ancient Greece and Rome, I couldn't help noticing that people who were ostracized and banished invariably got their own islands. Admittedly, it was hard on Julia, daughter of the Emperor Augustus, who found herself in the middle of the Adriatic with a staff of eunuch guards and servants whose tongues had been cut off as well. To Julia, a nymphomaniac, this presented a desperate problem, but a misanthrope would take the view that they couldn't *talk* either.

It was immediately obvious to me that being thrown in the Bastille was a godsend. The cells were not cells at all, but some of the best apartment deals in Paris, furnished with curtained beds, rugs, tables, chairs, stoves—plus, you could bring in your own stuff, including all the books you wanted. Inmates could send out for their meals, but even the prison food was good; the writer Marmontel lovingly described the marinated artichokes. Best of all, there were no restrictions against alcohol and tobacco. It lasted until liberty, equality, and fraternity came to the . . . rescue?

Nothing is so frustrating as studying the heyday of the British Empire on an American college campus. Among the soldiers of the Queen, all you had to do to be left alone was cheat at cards. Produce that fifth ace and you were avoided, shunned, and drummed out of the Family of Man. Never again would anyone say, "You looked so lonely I thought I'd join you." Nobody would care. They'd all be too busy giving you the silent treatment to make sure you spent the rest of your life playing solitaire. That would be your . . . punishment?

All this eventually led to my last-man-left-alive fantasy, which goes like so:

Once I realize what has happened, I take stock of the situation and start planning. In this version, my picky writer's mind interferes with my escapism. After years of proofreading and looking for loose ends and contradictions, I'm compelled to stop and point out that there's enough bottled water on store shelves to last the rest of my life, and that expiration dates on canned food are good for about two years, giving me time to learn how to garden and fish. Heat and lights are easy; I simply move into a house with a fireplace and pick up plenty of candles when I raid the supermarkets (they were already open when the disaster struck) of canned food and bottled water. Transportation is a snap; cars and trucks with full tanks and keys in the ignitions are everywhere (but not clogging up the roads; the disaster struck just before the start of morning rush hour).

AT other times I just lie back and enjoy it. In this version, *still* finding America too friendly, I decide to return to my roots. How to get to England? No problemo! I drive up to Alaska, row across to Russia, and head west in whatever abandoned vehicles I can find, including one of those railroad handcars that you pump, even though I can no longer bend over and pick up a piece of paper from the floor without groaning, "Oh, God!"

After resting up in Paris, I drive to Calais to cross the Channel. I could walk the 21 miles through the Chunnel but the English are a seafaring race, and the Calais harbor has plenty of boats with full tanks, so I wait for a warm, calm day and set out. Naturally I make it and spend the rest of my life summering at Balmoral and wintering at Osborne.

Call me abnormal, but the last-man-left-alive fantasy is more universal than misanthropic or else it would not have been used so often in fiction and movies. Therein lies the rub, however, because it's a static theme that must be compromised before it can succeed as entertainment. The first part of *Robinson Crusoe* is interesting, but it does not become exciting until he sees the human footprints in the sand and realizes he is not alone after all. Only then does the journal stop and the novel begin.

So who emerges from the mists of Balmoral? Is it John Kasich, who always looks as if he's about to bleat? No, it's somebody even worse. The warmest, friendliest, talkingest, smilingest, huggiest extrovert who ever lived, that's who.

My man Friday, Bill Clinton. **NR**

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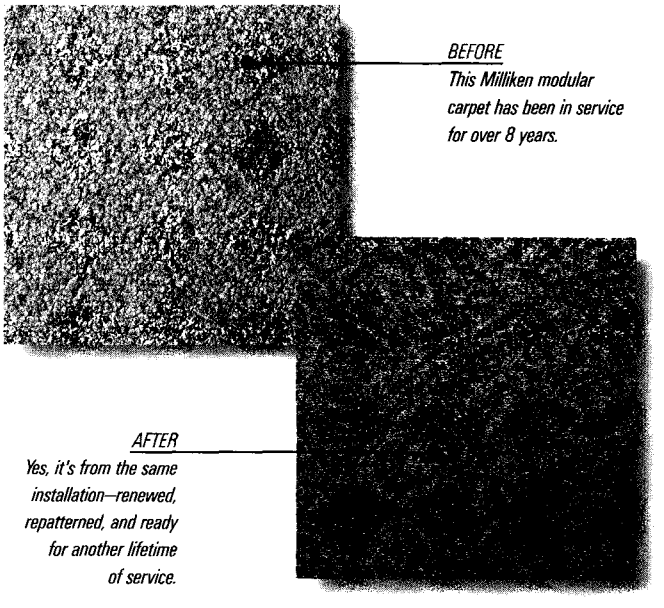

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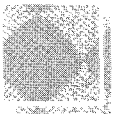
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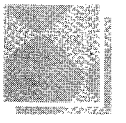
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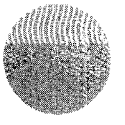
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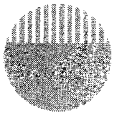
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